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THE POETICAL WORKS OF JOHN DRYDEN

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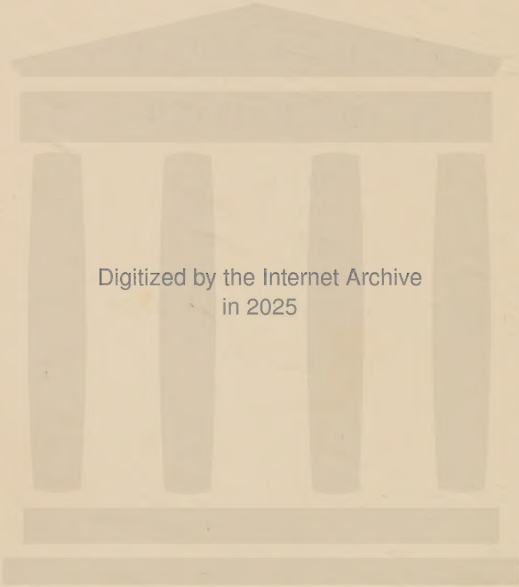
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THE

POETICAL WORKS OF

JOHN DRYDEN

VOLUME III

LONDON:

BELL AND DALDY, 186, FLEET STREET.

1865.

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SONGS, ODES, AND A MASQUE.

THE FAIR STRANGER, A SONG.*

HAPPY and free, securely blest,
No beauty could disturb my rest;
My amorous heart was in despair,
To find a new victorious fair.

Till you descending on our plains,
With foreign force renew my chains;
Where now you rule without control
The mighty sovereign of my soul.

Your smiles have more of conquering charms
Than all your native country arms:
Their troops we can expel with ease,
Who vanquish only when we please.

But in your eyes, oh! there's the spell,
Who can see them, and not rebel?
You make us captives by your stay,
Yet kill us if you go away.

* This song is a compliment to the Duchess of Portsmouth, on her first coming to England. *D.*

ON THE YOUNG STATESMEN.

Clarendon had law and sense,
Clifford was fierce and brave;
Bennet's grave look was a pretence,
And Danby's matchless impudence
Help'd to support the knave.

But Sunderland, Godolphin, Lory,
These will appear such chits in story,
'Twill turn all politics to jests,
To be repeated like John Dory,
When fiddlers sing at feasts.

Protect us, mighty Providence,
What would these madmen have?

[6] *But Sunderland*] This nobleman had certainly great and various abilities, with a complete versatility of genius, and a most insinuating address; but he was totally void of all principles, moral or religious, and a much more abandoned character than Shaftesbury, whom it is so common to calumniate. He certainly urged James II. to pursue arbitrary and illegal measures, that he intended should be his ruin, and betrayed him to the Prince of Orange. The Abbé de Longuerue relates, that Dr. Massey, of Christ Church, assured him, he once received an order from King James to expel twenty-four students of that college in Oxford, if they did not embrace popery. Massey, astonished at the order, was advised by a friend to go to London, and show it to the king; who assured him he had never given him such an order, and commended Massey for not having obeyed it; yet still this infatuated monarch continued to trust Sunderland. *Dr. J. W*

First, they would bribe us without pence,
Deceive us without common sense,
And without power enslave.

Shall free born men, in humble awe,
Submit to servile shame;
Who from consent and custom draw
The same right to be rul'd by law,
Which kings pretend to reign?

The duke shall wield his conquering sword,
The chancellor make a speech,
The king shall pass his honest word,
The pawn'd revenue sums afford,
And then, come kiss my breech.

So have I seen a king on chess
(His rooks and knights withdrawn,
His queen and bishops in distress)
Shifting about, grow less and less,
With here and there a pawn.

A SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY, 1687.

1

From harmony, from heavenly harmony
This universal frame began.
When nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,

And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
Arise, ye more than dead.
Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry,
In order to their stations leap,
And Music's power obey.
From harmony, from heavenly harmony
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man.

II.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?
When Jubal struck the corded shell,
His listening brethren stood around,
And, wondering, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound.
Less than a God they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell,
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

III.

The trumpet's loud clangor
Excites us to arms,
With shrill notes of anger,
And mortal alarms.
The double double double beat
Of the thundering drum
Cries, hark! the foes come;
Charge, Charge, 'tis too late to retreat.

IV.

The soft complaining flute
In dying notes discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers,
Whose dirge is whisper'd by the warbling lute.

V.

Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs, and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains, and height of passion,
For the fair, disdainful, dame.

VI.

But oh! what art can teach,
What human voice can reach,
The sacred organ's praise?
Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend the choirs above.

VII.

Orpheus could lead the savage race;
And trees uprooted left their place,
Sequacious of the lyre:
But bright Cecilia rais'd the wonder higher:

[37] *Sharp violins*] It is a judicious remark of Mr. Mason, that Dryden with propriety gives this epithet to the instrument; because, in the poet's time, they could not have arrived at that delicacy of tone, even in the hands of the best masters, which they now have in those of an inferior kind. See Essays on English Church Music, by the Rev. W. Mason, M.A. Precentor of York, 12mo. 1795, p. 218. *T.*

When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight appear'd
Mistaking earth for heaven.

GRAND CHORUS.

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the bless'd above;
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky.

SONG. FAREWELL, FAIR ARMIDA. *

Farewell, fair Armida, my joy and my grief,
In vain I have lov'd you, and hope no relief;
Undone by your virtue, too strict and severe,
Your eyes gave me love, and you gave me despair;
Now call'd by my honour, I seek with content
The fate which in pity you would not prevent:
To languish in love, were to find by delay
A death that's more welcome the speediest way.

* This song, written on the death of Captain Digby, has been given by Mr. Malone in his Life of Dryden, on account, he says, of its 'not having been preserved in Dryden's works, and being found entire only in a scarce Miscellany, viz. Covent Garden Drollery.' I must, however, observe, that

On seas and in battles, in bullets and fire,
The danger is less than in hopeless desire;
My death's wound you give, though far off I bear
My fall from your sight—not to cost you a tear:
But if the kind flood on a wave should convey,
And under your window my body should lay,
The wound on my breast when you happen to see,
You'll say with a sigh—it was given by me.

the song is printed entire in New Court Songs and Poems, by R. V. Gent. 8vo. 1672, p. 78. In this collection the second line runs thus:—

'In vain I have lov'd you, and *find* no relief.'

The sixth,

'*A* fate which in pity,' &c.

The twelfth,

'My *fate* from your sight,' &c.

An answer from Armida, as she is called, follows the Song in this collection; but it is not worth citing. The ridiculous parody on this Song in the Rehearsal is too well known to require copying here. But the following ludicrous stanza, which I have seen in MS. and which is a coeval parody on Dryden's Song to Armida, deserves to be cited:—

'Or if the king please that I may, at his charge,
Just under your window be brought in a barge;
Nay, 'twill be enough, as I died a brave fighter,
If but to your window I come in a lighter;
Or, rather than faile to shew my love fuller,
I would be content to arrive in a sculler;
But if me these favours my fate hath deny'd,
I hope to come floating up with a spring tyde.'

Armida is said to have been the beautiful Frances Stuart, wife of Charles, Duke of Richmond. Captain Digby was killed at sea in the engagement between the English and Dutch fleet, off Southwold Bay, in 1672. *T.*

THE LADY'S SONG.

A CHOIR of bright beauties in spring did appear,
To choose a May-lady to govern the year;
All the nymphs were in white, and the shepherds
in green;
The garland was given, and Phyllis was queen:
But Phyllis refus'd it, and sighing did say,
I'll not wear a garland while Pan is away.

While Pan and fair Syrinx are fled from our shore,
The Graces are banish'd, and Love is no more:
The soft god of pleasure, that warm'd our desires,
Has broken his bow, and extinguish'd his fires:
And vows that himself and his mother will mourn,
Till Pan and fair Syrinx in triumph return.

Forbear your addresses, and court us no more,
For we will perform what the deity swore:
But if you dare think of deserving our charms,
Away with your sheephooks, and take to your arms:
Then laurels and myrtles your brows shall adorn,
When Pan, and his son, and fair Syrinx return.

SONG.

FAIR, sweet, and young, receive a prize
Reserv'd for your victorious eyes:
From crowds, whom at your feet you see,

O pity, and distinguish me!
As I from thousand beauties more
Distinguish you, and only you adore.

Your face for conquest was design'd,
Your every motion charms my mind;
Angels, when you your silence break,
Forget their hymns, to hear you speak;
But when at once they hear and view,
Are loth to mount, and long to stay with you.

No graces can your form improve,
But all are lost, unless you love;
While that sweet passion you disdain,
Your veil and beauty are in vain:
In pity then prevent my fate,
For after dying all reprieve's too late.

SONG.

High state and honours to others impart,
But give me your heart:
That treasure, that treasure alone,
I beg for my own.
So gentle a love, so fervent a fire,
My soul does inspire;
That treasure, that treasure alone,
I beg for my own.
Your love let me crave;
Give me in possessing

So matchless a blessing;
That empire is all I would have.
Love's my petition,
All my ambition;
If e'er you discover
So faithful a lover,
So real a flame,
I'll die, I'll die,
So give up my game.

SONG.

Go tell Amynta, gentle swain,
I would not die, nor dare complain:
Thy tuneful voice with numbers join,
Thy words will more prevail than mine.
To souls oppress'd, and dumb with grief,
The gods ordain this kind relief;
That music should in sounds convey
What dying lovers dare not say.

A sigh or tear, perhaps, she'll give,
But love on pity cannot live.
Tell her that hearts for hearts were made,
And love with love is only paid.
Tell her my pains so fast increase,
That soon they will be past redress;
But ah! the wretch that speechless lies
Attends but death to close his eyes.

SONG TO A FAIR YOUNG LADY,

GOING OUT OF THE TOWN IN THE SPRING

Ask not the cause, why sullen Spring
So long delays her flowers to bear;
Why warbling birds forget to sing,
And winter storms invert the year:
Chloris is gone, and fate provides
To make it Spring where she resides.

Chloris is gone, the cruel fair;
She cast not back a pitying eye;
But left her lover in despair,
To sigh, to languish, and to die:
Ah, how can those fair eyes endure
To give the wounds they will not cure!

Great god of love, why hast thou made
A face that can all hearts command,
That all religions can invade,
And change the laws of every land?
Where thou hadst plac'd such power before,
Thou shouldst have made her mercy more.

When Chloris to the temple comes,
Adoring crowds before her fall;
She can restore the dead from tombs,
And every life but mine recall.
I only am by love design'd
To be the victim for mankind.

ALEXANDER'S FEAST;

OR, THE POWER OF MUSIC; AN ODE IN HONOUR OF ST. CECILIA'S DAY.

I.

'Twas at the royal feast, for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son:
Aloft in awful state
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne:
His valiant peers were plac'd around;
Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound:
(So should desert in arms be crown'd.)
The lovely Thais, by his side,
Sate like a blooming Eastern bride
In flower of youth and beauty's pride.
Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

CHORUS.

Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

II.

Timotheus, plac'd on high
Amid the tuneful quire,

[20] Dr. Burney has given a learned, full, and entertaining account of Timotheus, the musician, in his first volume of

With flying fingers touch'd the lyre:
The trembling notes ascend the sky,
And heavenly joys inspire.
The song began from Jove,
Who left his blissful seats above,
(Such is the power of mighty love.)
A dragon's fiery form belied the god:
Sublime on radiant spires he rode,
When he to fair Olympia press'd:
And while he sought her snowy breast:
Then, round her slender waist he curl'd,
And stamp'd an image of himself, a sovereign of the world.
The listening crowd admire the lofty sound,
A present deity, they shout around:
A present deity, the vaulted roofs rebound:
With ravish'd ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

CHORUS.

With ravish'd ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,

his History of Music, p. 405. Mr. Jackson, whose taste and feeling on the subject of music must be allowed to be just and exquisite, censures Dryden for extending the powers of music over the passions, and affirms that pleasure only can be excited. *Dr. J. W.*

Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

III.

The praise of Bacchus then the sweet musician sung,
Of Bacchus ever fair and ever young:
The jolly god in triumph comes;
Sound the trumpets; beat the drums;
Flush'd with a purple grace
He shows his honest face:
Now give the hautboys breath; he comes, he comes.
Bacchus, ever fair and young
Drinking joys did first ordain;
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure:
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

CHORUS.

Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure:
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

IV.

Sooth'd with the sound the king grew vain;
Fought all his battles o'er again;
And thrice he routed all his foes; and thrice he slew the slain.
The master saw the madness rise;
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes;

And, while he heaven and earth defied,
Chang'd his hand, and check'd his pride.
He chose a mournful muse
Soft pity to infuse:
He sung Darius great and good,
By too severe a fate,
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate,
And welt'ring in his blood;
Deserted, at his utmost need,
By those his former bounty fed;
On the bare earth expos'd he lies,
With not a friend to close his eyes.
With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,
Revolving in his alter'd soul
The various turns of chance below;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole;
And tears began to flow.

CHORUS.

Revolving in his alter'd soul
The various turns of chance below;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole;
And tears began to flow.

V.

The mighty master smil'd, to see
That love was in the next degree:
'Twas but a kindred sound to move,
For pity melts the mind to love.
Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,
Soon he sooth'd his soul to pleasures.

War, he sung, is toil and trouble;
Honour, but an empty bubble;
Never ending, still beginning,
Fighting still, and still destroying:
If the world be worth thy winning,
Think, O think it worth enjoying:
Lovely Thais sits besides thee,
Take the good the gods provide thee.
The many rend the skies with loud applause;
So Love was crown'd, but Music won the cause.
The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gaz'd on the fair
Who caus'd his care,
And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,
Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again:
At length, with love and wine at once oppress'd,
The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her breast.

CHORUS.

The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gaz'd on the fair
Who caus'd his care,
And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,
Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again:
At length, with love and wine at once oppress'd,
The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her breast.

VI.

Now strike the golden lyre again:
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain.
Break his bands of sleep asunder,
And rouse him, like a rattling peal of thunder.

Hark, hark, the horrid sound
Has rais'd up his head:
As awak'd from the dead,
And amaz'd, he stares around.
Revenge, revenge, Timotheus cries,
See the furies arise:
See the snakes that they rear,
How they hiss in their hair,
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
Behold a ghastly band,
Each a torch in his hand!
Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain,
And unburied remain
Inglorious on the plain:
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew.
Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian abodes,
And glittering temples of their hostile gods.
The princes applaud, with a furious joy;
And the king seiz'd a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fir'd another Troy.

CHORUS.

And the king seiz'd a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fir'd another Troy.

VII.

Thus, long ago,
Ere heaving bellows learn'd to blow,
While organs yet were mute;
Timotheus, to his breathing flute,
And sounding lyre,
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.
At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarg'd the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown;
He rais'd a mortal to the skies;
She drew an angel down.

GRAND CHORUS.

At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarg'd the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown;
He rais'd a mortal to the skies;
She drew an angel down.

VENI CREATOR SPIRITUS,

PARAPHRASED.

CREATOR Spirit, by whose aid
The world's foundations first were laid,
Come visit every pious mind;
Come pour thy joys on humankind;
From sin and sorrow set us free,
And make thy temples worthy thee.
O source of uncreated light,
The Father's promised Paraclete!
Thrice holy fount, thrice holy fire,
Our hearts with heavenly love inspire;
Come, and thy sacred unction bring
To sanctify us, while we sing.
Plenteous of grace, descend from high,
Rich in thy sevenfold energy!
Thou strength of his Almighty hand,
Whose power does heaven and earth command.
Proceeding Spirit, our defence,
Who dost the gifts of tongues dispense,
And crown'st thy gift with eloquence!
Refine and purge our earthly parts;
But, oh, inflame and fire our hearts!
Our frailties help, our vice control,
Submit the senses to the soul;
And when rebellious they are grown,
Then lay thy hand, and hold 'em down.

Chase from our minds the infernal foe,
And peace, the fruit of love, bestow;
And lest our feet should step astray,
Protect and guide us in the way.
Make us eternal truths receive,
And practise all that we believe:
Give us thyself, that we may see
The Father, and the Son, by thee.
Immortal honour, endless fame,
Attend the Almighty Father's name:
The Saviour Son be glorified,
Who for lost man's redemption died;
And equal adoration be,
Eternal Paraclete, to thee.

THE SECULAR MASQUE.

Enter JANUS.

JANUS.

CHRONOS, Chronos, mend thy pace,
A hundred times the rolling sun
Around the radiant belt has run
In his revolving race.
Behold, behold, the goal in sight,
Spread thy fans, and wing thy flight.

39 *Eternal Paraclete*] This is a most elegant and beautiful little morsel, and one of his most correct compositions. Its poetry and piety aid each other. *Dr. J. W.*

Enter CHRONOS, *with a scythe in his hand, and a globe on his back, which he sets down at his entrance.*

CHRONOS.

Weary, weary of my weight,
Let me, let me drop my freight,
And leave the world behind.
I could not bear,
Another year,
The load of humankind.

Enter MOMUS *laughing.*

MOMUS.

Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! well hast thou done
To lay down thy pack,
And lighten thy back,
The world was a fool, e'er since it begun,
And since neither Janus, nor Chronos, nor I
Can hinder the crimes,
Or mend the bad times,
'Tis better to laugh than to cry.

CHORUS OF ALL THREE.

'Tis better to laugh than to cry.

JANUS.

Since Momus comes to laugh below,
Old Time begin the show,
That he may see, in every scene,
What changes in this age have been.

CHRONOS.

Then goddess of the silver bow begin.

[*Horns, or hunting music within.*

Enter DIANA.

DIANA.

With horns and with hounds I waken the day;
And hie to the woodland-walks away:
I tuck up my robe, and am buskin'd soon,
And tie to my forehead a wexing moon.
I course the fleet stag, unkennel the fox,
And chase the wild goats o'er summits of rocks,
With shouting and hooting we pierce through the sky,
And Echo turns hunter, and doubles the cry.

CHORUS OF ALL.

With shouting and hooting we pierce thro' the sky,
And Echo turns hunter, and doubles the cry.

JANUS.

Then our age was in it's prime:

CHRONOS.

Free from rage:

DIANA.

And free from crime:

MOMUS.

A very merry, dancing, drinking,
Laughing, quaffing, and unthinking time.

CHORUS OF ALL.

Then our age was in it's prime,
Free from rage, and free from crime,
A very merry, dancing, drinking,
Laughing, quaffing, and unthinking time.

[*Dance of* DIANA's *attendants.*

Enter MARS.

MARS.

Inspire the vocal brass, inspire;
The world is past its infant age:
  Arms and honour,
  Arms and honour,
Set the martial mind on fire,
And kindle manly rage.
Mars has look'd the sky to red;
And Peace, the lazy good, is fled.
Plenty, peace, and pleasure fly;
  The sprightly green,
In woodland-walks, no more is seen;
The sprightly green has drunk the Tyrian dye.

CHORUS OF ALL.

Plenty, peace, &c.

MARS.

Sound the trumpet, beat the drum;
Through all the world around,
Sound a reveillé, sound, sound,
The warrior god is come.

CHORUS OF ALL.

Sound the trumpet, &c.

MOMUS.

Thy sword within the scabbard keep,
  And let mankind agree;
Better the world were fast asleep,
Than kept awake by thee.
The fools are only thinner,
  With all our cost and care;

But neither side a winner,
For things are as they were.

CHORUS OF ALL.

The fools are only, &c.

Enter VENUS.

VENUS.

Calms appear when storms are past;
Love will have his hour at last:
Nature is my kindly care;
Mars destroys, and I repair;
Take me, take me, while you may,
Venus comes not every day.

CHORUS OF ALL

Take her, take her, &c.

CHRONOS.

The world was then so light,
I scarcely felt the weight;
Joy rul'd the day, and Love the night.
But, since the queen of pleasure left the ground,
I faint, I lag,
And feebly drag
The ponderous orb around.

MOMUS.

All, all of a piece throughout:
Thy chase had a beast in view;
[*Pointing to Diana.*
Thy wars brought nothing about; [*To Mars.*
Thy lovers were all untrue. [*To Venus.*

JANUS.

'Tis well an old age is out.

CHRONOS.

And time to begin a new.

CHORUS OF ALL.

All, all of a piece throughout;
Thy chase had a beast in view:
Thy wars brought nothing about;
Thy lovers were all untrue.
'Tis well an old age is out,
And time to begin a new

[*Dance of huntsmen, nymphs, warriors, and lovers.*

SONG OF A SCHOLAR AND HIS MISTRESS,

WHO BEING CROSSED BY THEIR FRIENDS, FELL MAD FOR ONE ANOTHER; AND NOW FIRST MEET IN BEDLAM.

Music within. The lovers enter at opposite doors, each held by a keeper.

PHILLIS.

Look, look, I see—I see my love appear!
'Tis he——'Tis he alone;
For, like him there is none:
'Tis the dear, dear man, 'tis thee, dear.

AMYNTAS.

Hark! the winds war;
The foamy waves roar;
I see a ship afar,
Tossing and tossing, and making to the shore:

But what's that I view,
So radiant of hue,
St. Hermo, St. Hermo, that sits upon the sails?
Ah! No, no, no.
St. Hermo, never, never shone so bright;
'Tis Phillis, only Phillis, can shoot so fair a light;
'Tis Phillis, 'tis Phillis, that saves the ship alone,
For all the winds are hush'd, and the storm is overblown.

PHILLIS.

Let me go, let me run, let me fly to his arms.

AMYNTAS.

If all the fates combine,
And all the furies join,
I'll force my way to Phillis, and break through [the charm.

[*Here they break from their keepers, run to each other, and embrace.*

PHILLIS.

Shall I marry the man I love?
And shall I conclude my pains?
Now bless'd be the powers above,
I feel the blood bound in my veins;
With a lively leap it began to move,
And the vapours leave my brains.

AMYNTAS.

Body join'd to body, and heart join'd to heart,
To make sure of the cure,
Go call the man in black, to mumble o'er his part.

PHILLIS.

But suppose he should stay . . . . . .

AMYNTAS.

At worst if he delay,
'Tis a work must be done,
We'll borrow but a day,
And the better the sooner begun.

CHORUS OF BOTH.

At worst if he delay, &c.

[*They run out together hand in hand.*

SONGS IN THE INDIAN EMPEROR.

I.

Ah fading joy; how quickly art thou past!
Yet we thy ruin haste.
As if the cares of human life were few,
We seek out new:
And follow fate, which would too fast pursue.
See, how on every bough the birds express,
In their sweet notes, their happiness.
They all enjoy, and nothing spare;
But on their mother Nature lay their care:
Why then should man, the lord of all below,
Such troubles choose to know,
As none of all his subjects undergo?
Hark, hark, the waters fall, fall, fall,
And with a murmuring sound
Dash, dash upon the ground,
To gentle slumbers call.

II.

I LOOK'D and saw within the book of fate,
When many days did lour,
When lo! one happy hour
Leap'd up, and smil'd to save the sinking state;
A day shall come when in thy power
Thy cruel foes shall be;
Then shall thy land be free:
And then in peace shall reign;
But take, O take that opportunity,
Which, once refus'd, will never come again.

SONG IN THE MAIDEN QUEEN.

I FEED a flame within, which so torments me,
That it both pains my heart, and yet contents me:
'Tis such a pleasing smart, and I so love it,
That I had rather die than once remove it.

Yet he for whom I grieve shall never know it;
My tongue does not betray, nor my eyes show it.
Not a sigh, nor a tear, my pain discloses,
But they fall silently, like dew on roses.

Thus, to prevent my love from being cruel,
My heart's the sacrifice, as 'tis the fuel:
And while I suffer this to give him quiet,
My faith rewards my love, though he deny it.

On his eyes will I gaze, and there delight me;
Where I conceal my love no frown can fright me:
To be more happy, I dare not aspire;
Nor can I fall more low, mounting no higher.

SONGS IN THE CONQUEST OF GRANADA.

I.

Wherever I am, and whatever I do,
My Phyllis is still in my mind;
When angry, I mean not to Phyllis to go,
My feet, of themselves, the way find:
Unknown to myself I am just at her door,
And, when I would rail, I can bring out no more,
Than, Phyllis too fair and unkind!

When Phyllis I see, my heart bounds in my breast,
And the love I would stifle is shown;
But asleep, or awake, I am never at rest,
When from my eyes Phyllis is gone.
Sometimes a sad dream does delude my sad mind;
But, alas! when I wake, and no Phyllis I find,
How I sigh to myself all alone!

Should a king be my rival in her I adore,
He should offer his treasure in vain:
O, let me alone to be happy and poor,
And give me my Phyllis again!
Let Phyllis be mine, and but ever be kind,

I could to a desert with her be confin'd,
And envy no monarch his reign.

Alas! I discover too much of my love,
And she too well knows her own power!
She makes me each day a new martyrdom prove,
And makes me grow jealous each hour:
But let her each minute torment my poor mind,
I had rather love Phyllis, both false and unkind,
Than ever be freed from her power.

II.

He. How unhappy a lover am I,
While I sigh for my Phyllis in vain;
All my hopes of delight
Are another man's right,
Who is happy, while I am in pain!

She. Since her honour allows no relief,
But to pity the pains which you bear,
'Tis the best of your fate,
In a hopeless estate,
To give o'er, and betimes to despair.

He. I have tried the false med'cine in vain;
For I wish what I hope not to win:
From without, my desire
Has no food to its fire;
But it burns and consumes me within.

She. Yet, at least, 'tis a pleasure to know
That you are not unhappy alone:

For the nymph you adore
Is as wretched, and more;
And counts all your sufferings her own.

HE. O ye gods, let me suffer for both;
At the feet of my Phyllis I'll lie:
I'll resign up my breath,
And take pleasure in death,
To be pitied by her when I die.

SHE. What her honour denied you in life,
In her death she will give to your love.
Such a flame as is true
After fate will renew,
For the souls to meet closer above.

SONG OF THE SEA-FIGHT, IN AMBOYNA.

WHO ever saw a noble sight,
That never view'd a brave sea-fight!
Hang up your bloody colours in the air,
Up with your fights, and your nettings prepare;
Your merry mates cheer, with a lusty bold spright,
Now each man his brindice, and then to the fight.
St. George, St. George, we cry,
The shouting Turks reply.
Oh now it begins, and the gun-room grows hot,
Ply it with culverin and with small shot;
Hark, does it not thunder? no, 'tis the guns roar,
The neighbouring billows are turn'd into gore;

Now each man must resolve to die,
For here the coward cannot fly.
Drums and trumpets toll the knell,
And culverins the passing bell.
Now, now they grapple, and now board amain;
Blow up the hatches, they're off all again:
Give them a broadside, the dice run at all,
Down comes the mast and yard, and tacklings fall;
She grows giddy now, like blind Fortune's wheel,
She sinks there, she sinks, she turns up her keel.
Who ever beheld so noble a sight,
As this so brave, so bloody sea-fight!

INCANTATION IN ŒDIPUS.

Tir. Choose the darkest part o' th' grove,
Such as ghosts at noonday love.
Dig a trench, and dig it nigh
Where the bones of Laius lie;
Altars rais'd, of turf or stone,
Will th' infernal powers have none,
Answer me, if this be done?
All Pr. 'Tis done.
Tir. Is the sacrifice made fit?
Draw her backward to the pit:
Draw the barren heifer back;
Barren let her be, and black.
Cut the curl'd hair that grows
Full betwixt her horns and brows:

And turn your faces from the sun,
Answer me, if this be done?
ALL PR. 'Tis done.
TIR. Pour in blood, and blood-like wine,
To Mother Earth and Proserpine:
Mingle milk into the stream;
Feast the ghosts that love the steam:
Snatch a brand from funeral pile:
Toss it in, to make them boil;
And turn your faces from the sun,
Answer me, if this be done?
ALL PR. 'Tis done.

SONGS IN ALBION AND ALBANIUS.

I.

CEASE, Augusta! cease thy mourning,
Happy days appear,
Godlike Albion is returning,
Loyal hearts to cheer!
Every grace his youth adorning,
Glorious as the star of morning,
Or the planet of the year.

II.

ALBION, by the nymph attended,
Was to Neptune recommended,
Peace and plenty spread the sails;
Venus, in her shell before him,

From the sands in safety bore him,
And supplied Etesian gales.
Archon on the shore commanding,
Lowly met him at his landing,
Crowds of people swarm'd around;
Welcome, rang like peals of thunder,
Welcome, rent the skies asunder,
Welcome, heaven and earth resound.

III.

Infernal offspring of the Night,
Debarr'd of heaven your native right,
And from the glorious fields of light,
Condemn'd in shades to drag the chain,
And fill with groans the gloomy plain;
Since pleasures here are none below,
Be ill our good, our joy be woe;
Our work t' embroil the worlds above,
Disturb their union, disunite their love,
And blast the beauteous frame of our victorious foe.

IV.

See the god of seas attends thee,
Nymphs divine, a beauteous train:
All the calmer gales befriend thee
In thy passage o'er the main:
Every maid her locks is binding,
Every Triton's horn is winding,
Welcome to the watery plain.

V.

Albion, lov'd of gods and men,
Prince of Peace too mildly reigning,
Cease thy sorrow and complaining,
Thou shalt be restor'd again:
Albion, lov'd of gods and men.

Still thou art the care of heaven,
In thy youth to exile driven:
Heaven thy ruin then prevented,
Till the guilty land repented:
In thy age, when none could aid thee,
Foes conspir'd, and friends betray'd thee.
To the brink of danger driven,
Still thou art the care of heaven.

SONGS IN KING ARTHUR.

I.

Where a battle is supposed to be given behind the scenes, with drums, trumpets, and military shouts and excursions; after which, the Britons, expressing their joy for the victory, sing this song of triumph.

Come, if you dare, our trumpets sound;
Come, if you dare, the foes rebound:
We come, we come, we come, we come,
Says the double, double, double beat of the thundering drum.

Now they charge on amain,
Now they rally again:
The gods from above the mad labour behold,
And pity mankind, that will perish for gold.

The fainting Saxons quit their ground,
Their trumpets languish in the sound:
They fly, they fly, they fly, they fly;
Victoria, Victoria, the bold Britons cry.
Now the victory's won,
To the plunder we run:
We return to our lasses like fortunate traders,
Triumphant with spoils of the vanquish'd invaders.

II.

MAN SINGS.

Oh sight, the mother of desires,
What charming objects dost thou yield!
'Tis sweet, when tedious night expires,
To see the rosy morning gild
The mountain-tops, and paint the field!
But when Clarinda comes in sight,
She makes the summer's day more bright;
And when she goes away, 'tis night.

CHORUS.

When fair Clarinda comes in sight, &c.

WOMAN SINGS.

'Tis sweet the blushing morn to view;
And plains adorn'd with pearly dew:

But such cheap delights to see,
Heaven and nature
Give each creature;
They have eyes, as well as we;
This is the joy, all joys above,
To see, to see,
That only she,
That only she we love!

CHORUS.

This is the joy, all joys above, &c.

III.

Two daughters of this aged stream are we;
And both our sea-green locks have comb'd for thee;
Come bathe with us an hour or two,
Come naked in, for we are so:
What danger from a naked foe?
Come bathe with us, come bathe, and share
What pleasures in the floods appear;
We'll beat the waters till they bound,
And circle round, around, around,
And circle round, around.

IV.

Ye blustering brethren of the skies,
Whose breath has ruffled all the watery plain
Retire, and let Britannia rise,
In triumph o'er the main.

Serene and calm, and void of fear,
The Queen of Islands must appear:
Serene and calm, as when the Spring
The new created world began,
And birds on boughs did softly sing
Their peaceful homage paid to man;
While Eurus did his blasts forbear,
In favour of the tender year.
Retreat, rude winds, retreat
To hollow rocks, your stormy seat;
There swell your lungs, and vainly, vainly threat.

V.

For folded flocks, on fruitful plains,
The shepherd's and the farmer's gains,
Fair Britain all the world outvies;
And Pan, as in Arcadia, reigns,
Where pleasure mix'd with profit lies.

Though Jason's fleece was fam'd of old,
The British wool is growing gold;
No mines can more of wealth supply;
It keeps the peasant from the cold,
And takes for kings the Tyrian dye.

VI.

Fairest isle, all isles excelling,
Seat of pleasures and of loves;

Venus here will choose her dwelling,
And forsake her Cyprian groves.

Cupid from his favourite nation
Care and envy will remove;
Jealousy, that poisons passion,
And despair, that dies for love.

Gentle murmurs, sweet complaining,
Sighs, that blow the fire of love;
Soft repulses, kind disdaining,
Shall be all the pains you prove.

Every swain shall pay his duty,
Grateful every nymph shall prove;
And as these excel in beauty,
Those shall be renown'd for love.

SONG OF JEALOUSY, IN LOVE TRIUMPHANT.

What state of life can be so blest
As love, that warms a lover's breast?
Two souls in one, the same desire
To grant the bliss, and to require!
But if in heaven a hell we find,
'Tis all from thee,
O Jealousy!
'Tis all from thee,
O Jealousy!

Thou tyrant, tyrant Jealousy,
Thou tyrant of the mind!

All other ills, though sharp they prove,
Serve to refine, and perfect love:
In absence, or unkind disdain,
Sweet hope relieves the lover's pain.
But, ah! no cure but death we find,
To set us free
From Jealousy:
O Jealousy!
Thou tyrant, tyrant Jealousy,
Thou tyrant of the mind!

False in thy glass all objects are,
Some set too near, and some too far:
Thou art the fire of endless night,
The fire that burns, and gives no light.
All torments of the damn'd we find
In only thee,
O Jealousy!
Thou tyrant, tyrant Jealousy,
Thou tyrant of the mind!

PROLOGUES AND EPILOGUES.

PROLOGUE TO THE RIVAL LADIES.

'Tis much desir'd, you judges of the town
Would pass a vote to put all prologues down:
For who can show me, since they first were writ,
They e'er converted one hard-hearted wit?
Yet the world's mended well; in former days
Good prologues were as scarce as now good plays.
For the reforming poets of our age,
In this first charge, spend their poetic rage:
Expect no more when once the prologue's done;
The wit is ended ere the play's begun.
You now have habits, dances, scenes, and rhymes;
High language often; ay, and sense, sometimes.
As for a clear contrivance, doubt it not;
They blow out candles to give light to th' plot.
And for surprise, two bloody-minded men
Fight till they die, then rise and dance again.
Such deep intrigues you're welcome to this day:
But blame yourselves, not him who writ the play;
Though his plot's dull, as can be well desired,
Wit stiff as any you have e'er admired:
He's bound to please, not to write well; and knows
There is a mode in plays as well as clothes;
Therefore, kind judges . . . .

A SECOND PROLOGUE ENTERS.

2. Hold; would you admit
For judges all you see within the pit?
1. Whom would he then except, or on what score?
2. All who (like him) have writ ill plays before;
For they, like thieves condemn'd, are hangmen
To execute the members of their trade. [made,
All that are writing now he would disown,
But then he must except—even all the town;
All choleric, losing gamesters, who, in spite,
Will damn to-day, because they lost last night;
All servants, whom their mistress' scorn upbraids;
All maudlin lovers, and all slighted maids;
All, who are out of humour, or severe;
All, that want wit, or hope to find it here.

PROLOGUE TO THE INDIAN QUEEN.

As the music plays a soft air, the curtain rises slowly, and discovers an Indian boy and girl sleeping under two plantain-trees; and, when the curtain is almost up, the music turns into a tune expressing an alarm, at which the boy awakes, and speaks:

Boy. Wake, wake, Quevira! our soft rest must
And fly together with our country's peace! [cease,
No more must we sleep under plantain shade,
Which neither heat could pierce, nor cold invade;

Where bounteous nature never feels decay,
And opening buds drive falling fruits away.
QUE. Why should men quarrel here, where all possess
As much as they can hope for by success?—
None can have most, where nature is so kind,
As to exceed man's use, though not his mind.
BOY. By ancient prophecies we have been told,
Our world shall be subdued by one more old;—
And, see, that world already's hither come.
QUE. If these be they, we welcome then our doom!
Their looks are such, that mercy flows from thence,
More gentle than our native innocence.
BOY. Why should we then fear these, our enemies,
That rather seem to us like deities?
QUE. By their protection, let us beg to live;
They came not here to conquer, but forgive.
If so, your goodness may your power express,
And we shall judge both best by our success.

EPILOGUE TO THE INDIAN QUEEN.

SPOKEN BY MONTEZUMA.

YOU see what shifts we are enforc'd to try,
To help out wit with some variety;
Shows may be found that never yet were seen,
'Tis hard to find such wit as ne'er has been:

You have seen all that this old world can do,
We, therefore, try the fortune of the new,
And hope it is below your aim to hit
At untaught nature with your practis'd wit:
Our naked Indians, then, when wits appear,
Would as soon choose to have the Spaniards here.
'Tis true, you have marks enough, the plot, the show,
The poet's scenes, nay, more, the painter's too;
If all this fail, considering the cost,
'Tis a true voyage to the Indies lost:
But if you smile on all, then these designs,
Like the imperfect treasure of our minds,
Will pass for current wheresoe'er they go,
When to your bounteous hands their stamps they owe.

EPILOGUE TO THE INDIAN EMPEROR.

BY A MERCURY.

To all and singular in this full meeting,
Ladies and gallants, Phœbus sends ye greeting.
To all his sons, by whate'er title known,
Whether of court, or coffee house, or town;
From his most mighty sons, whose confidence
Is plac'd in lofty sound, and humble sense,
Even to his little infants of the time,
Who write new songs, and trust in tune and rhyme;
Be 't known, that Phœbus (being daily grieved
To see good plays condemn'd, and bad received)

Ordains your judgment upon every cause,
Henceforth, be limited by wholesome laws.
He first thinks fit no sonnetteer advance
His censure farther than the song or dance.
Your wit burlesque may one step higher climb,
And in his sphere may judge all doggerel rhyme;
All proves, and moves, and loves, and honours too;
All that appears high sense, and scarce is low.
As for the coffee wits, he says not much;
Their proper business is to damn the Dutch:
For the great dons of wit—
Phœbus gives them full privilege alone,
To damn all others, and cry up their own.
Last, for the ladies, 'tis Apollo's will,
They should have power to save, but not to kill:
For love and he long since have thought it fit,
Wit live by beauty, beauty reign by wit.

PROLOGUE TO SIR MARTIN MARR-ALL.

Fools, which each man meets in his dish each day,
Are yet the great regalios of a play;
In which to poets you but just appear,
To prize that highest, which cost them so dear:
Fops in the town more easily will pass;
One story makes a statutable ass:
But such in plays must be much thicker sown,
Like yolks of eggs, a dozen beat to one.

Observing poets all their walks invade,
As men watch woodcocks gliding through a glade:
And when they have enough for comedy,
They stow their several bodies in a pie:
The poet's but the cook to fashion it,
For, gallants, you yourselves have found the wit.
To bid you welcome, would your bounty wrong;
None welcome those who bring their cheer along.

PROLOGUE TO THE TEMPEST.

As when a tree's cut down, the secret root
Lives under ground, and thence new branches shoot;
So from old Shakespeare's honour'd dust, this day
Springs up and buds a new reviving play:
Shakespeare, who (taught by none) did first impart
To Fletcher wit, to labouring Jonson art.
He, monarch like, gave those, his subjects, law;
And is that nature which they paint and draw.
Fletcher reach'd that which on his heights did grow,
While Jonson crept, and gather'd all below.
This did his love, and this his mirth digest:
One imitates him most, the other best.
If they have since outwrit all other men, [pen.
'Tis with the drops which fell from Shakespeare's
The storm, which vanish'd on the neighb'ring shore,
Was taught by Shakespeare's Tempest first to roar.
That innocence and beauty, which did smile

In Fletcher, grew on this enchanted isle.
But Shakespeare's magic could not copied be;
Within that circle none durst walk but he.
I must confess 'twas bold, nor would you now
That liberty to vulgar wits allow,
Which works by magic supernatural things:
But Shakespeare's power is sacred as a king's.
Those legends from old priesthood were received,
And he then writ, as people then believed.
But if for Shakespeare we your grace implore,
We for our theatre shall want it more:
Who, by our dearth of youths, are forc'd to employ
One of our women to present a boy;
And that's a transformation, you will say,
Exceeding all the magic in the play.
Let none expect in the last act to find
Her sex transform'd from man to womankind.
Whate'er she was before the play began,
All you shall see of her is perfect man.
Or, if your fancy will be farther led
To find her woman—it must be a-bed.

PROLOGUE TO TYRANNIC LOVE.

Self-love, which, never rightly understood,
Makes poets still conclude their plays are good,
And malice in all critics reigns so high,
That for small errors, they whole plays decry;

So that to see this fondness, and that spite,
You'd think that none but madmen judge or write.
Therefore our poet, as he thinks not fit
To impose upon you what he writes for wit;
So hopes, that, leaving you your censures free,
You equal judges of the whole will be:
They judge but half, who only faults will see.
Poets, like lovers, should be bold and dare,
They spoil their business with an over care;
And he, who servilely creeps after sense,
Is safe, but ne'er will reach an excellence.
Hence 'tis, our poet, in his conjuring,
Allow'd his fancy the full scope and swing.
But when a tyrant for his theme he had,
He loos'd the reins, and bid his muse run mad:
And though he stumbles in a full career,
Yet rashness is a better fault than fear.
He saw his way; but in so swift a pace,
To choose the ground might be to lose the race.
They then, who of each trip the advantage take,
Find but those faults, which they want wit to make.

EPILOGUE TO THE WILD GALLANT,

WHEN REVIVED.

Of all dramatic writing, comic wit,
As 'tis the best, so 'tis most hard to hit.
For it lies all in level to the eye,
Where all may judge, and each defect may spy.

Humour is that which every day we meet,
And therefore known as every public street;
In which, if e'er the poet go astray,
You all can point, 'twas there he lost his way.
But, what's so common, to make pleasant too,
Is more than any wit can always do.
For 'tis like Turks, with hen and rice to treat;
To make regalios out of common meat.
But, in your diet, you grow savages:
Nothing but human flesh your taste can please;
And, as their feasts with slaughter'd slaves began,
So you, at each new play, must have a man.
Hither you come, as to see prizes fought;
If no blood's drawn, you cry, the prize is nought.
But fools grow wary now; and, when they see
A poet eyeing round the company,
Straight each man for himself begins to doubt;
They shrink like seamen when a press comes out.
Few of them will be found for public use,
Except you charge an oaf upon each house,
Like the train bands, and every man engage
For a sufficient fool, to serve the stage.
And when, with much ado, you get him there,
Where he in all his glory should appear,
Your poets make him such rare things to say,
That he's more wit than any man i' th' play:
But of so ill a mingle with the rest,
As when a parrot's taught to break a jest.
Thus, aiming to be fine, they make a show,
As tawdry squires in country churches do.

Things well consider'd, 'tis so hard to make
A comedy, which should the knowing take,
That our dull poet, in despair to please,
Does humbly beg, by me, his writ of ease.
'Tis a land-tax, which he's too poor to pay;
You therefore must some other impost lay.
Would you but change, for serious plot and verse,
This motley garniture of fool and farce,
Nor scorn a mode, because 'tis taught at home,
Which does, like vests, our gravity become,
Our poet yields you should this play refuse:
As tradesmen, by the change of fashions, lose,
With some content, their fripperies of France,
In hope it may their staple trade advance.

PROLOGUE,

SPOKEN THE FIRST DAY OF THE KING'S HOUSE ACTING AFTER THE FIRE.

So shipwreck'd passengers escape to land,
So look they, when on the bare beach they stand
Dropping and cold, and their first fear scarce o'er,
Expecting famine on a desert shore.
From that hard climate we must wait for bread,
Whence e'en the natives, forc'd by hunger, fled.
Our stage does human chance present to view,
But ne'er before was seen so sadly true:
You are chang'd too, and your pretence to see
Is but a nobler name for charity.

Your own provisions furnish out our feasts,
While you the founders make yourselves the guests.
Of all mankind beside fate had some care,
But for poor Wit no portion did prepare,
'Tis left a rent-charge to the brave and fair.
You cherish'd it, and now its fall you mourn,
Which blind unmanner'd zealots make their scorn,
Who think that fire a judgment on the stage,
Which spar'd not temples in its furious rage.
But as our new built city rises higher,
So from old theatres may new aspire,
Since fate contrives magnificence by fire.
Our great metropolis does far surpass
Whate'er is now, and equals all that was:
Our wit as far does foreign wit excel,
And, like a king, should in a palace dwell.
But we with golden hopes are vainly fed,
Talk high, and entertain you in a shed:
Your presence here, for which we humbly sue,
Will grace old theatres, and build up new.

EPILOGUE TO THE SECOND PART OF THE CONQUEST OF GRANADA.

They who have best succeeded on the stage,
Have still conform'd their genius to their age.
Thus Jonson did mechanic humour show,
When men were dull, and conversation low.

Then comedy was faultless, but 'twas coarse:
Cobb's tankard was a jest, and Otter's horse.
And, as their comedy, their love was mean;
Except, by chance, in some one labour'd scene,
Which must atone for an ill written play.
They rose, but at their height could seldom stay.
Fame then was cheap, and the first comer sped
And they have kept it since, by being dead.
But, were they now to write, when critics weigh
Each line, and every word, thoughout a play,
None of them, no not Jonson in his height,
Could pass, without allowing grains for weight.
Think it not envy, that these truths are told:
Our poet's not malicious, though he's bold.
'Tis not to brand them, that their faults are shown,
But, by their errors, to excuse his own.
If love and honour now are higher rais'd,
'Tis not the poet, but the age is prais'd.
Wit's now arriv'd to a more high degree;
Our native language more refin'd and free.
Our ladies and our men now speak more wit
In conversation, than those poets writ.
Then, one of these is, consequently, true;
That what this poet writes comes short of you,
And imitates you ill (which most he fears),
Or else his writing is not worse than theirs.
Yet though you judge (as sure the critics will),
That some before him writ with greater skill,
In this one praise he has their fame surpast,
To please an age more gallant than the last.

PROLOGUE TO AMBOYNA.

As needy gallants in the scriveners' hands,
Court the rich knave that gripes their mortgag'd lands,
The first fat buck of all the season's sent,
And keeper takes no fee in compliment:
The dotage of some Englishmen is such,
To fawn on those who ruin them—the Dutch.
They shall have all, rather than make a war
With those who of the same religion are.
The Straits, the Guinea trade, the herrings too,
Nay, to keep friendship, they shall pickle you.
Some are resolv'd not to find out the cheat,
But, cuckold like, love him who does the feat:
What injuries soe'er upon us fall,
Yet, still the same religion answers all:
Religion wheedled you to civil war,
Drew English blood, and Dutchmen's now would spare:
Be gull'd no longer, for you'll find it true,
They have no more religion, faith—than you;
Interest's the god they worship in their state;
And you, I take it, have not much of that.
Well, monarchies may own religion's name,
But states are atheists in their very frame.
They share a sin, and such proportions fall,
That, like a stink, 'tis nothing to them all.
How they love England, you shall see this day;
No map shows Holland truer than our play:

Their pictures and inscriptions well we know;
We may be bold one medal sure to show.
View then their falsehoods, rapine, cruelty;
And think what once they were, they still would be:
But hope not either language, plot, or art;
'Twas writ in haste, but with an English heart:
And least hope wit; in Dutchmen that would be
As much improper, as would honesty.

EPILOGUE TO AMBOYNA.

A POET once the Spartans led to fight,
And made them conquer in the muse's right;
So would our poet lead you on this day,
Showing your tortur'd fathers in his play.
To one well born the affront is worse, and more,
When he's abus'd, and baffled by a boor:
With an ill grace the Dutch their mischiefs do,
They've both ill nature and ill manners too.
Well may they boast themselves an ancient nation,
For they were bred ere manners were in fashion;
And their new commonwealth has set them free,
Only from honour and civility.
Venetians do not more uncouthly ride,
Than did their lubber state mankind bestride;
Their sway became them with as ill a mien,
As their own paunches swell above their chin:
Yet is their empire no true growth, but humour,
And only two kings' touch can cure the tumour.

As Cato did his Afric fruits display,
So we before your eyes their Indies lay:
All loyal English will, like him, conclude,
Let Cæsar live, and Carthage be subdued!

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN AT THE OPENING OF THE NEW HOUSE,* MARCH 26, 1674.

A PLAIN built house, after so long a stay,
Will send you half unsatisfied away;
When, fallen from your expected pomp, you find
A bare convenience only is design'd.
You, who each day can theatres behold,
Like Nero's palace, shining all with gold,
Our mean ungilded stage will scorn, we fear,
And, for the homely room, disdain the cheer.
Yet now cheap druggets to a mode are grown,
And a plain suit, since we can make but one,
Is better than to be by tarnish'd gawdry known.

* This prologue must certainly have been written for the King's company, which I suppose at this time might have opened their house in Drury Lane. The reflection cast upon the taste of the town in these three lines,

> 'Twere folly now a stately pile to raise,
> To build a playhouse while you throw down plays,
> While scenes, machines, and empty operas reign:'

is certainly levelled at the Duke's company, who had exhibited the Siege of Rhodes, and other expensive operas, and who now were getting up Psyche, Circe, &c. *D.*

They, who are by your favours wealthy made,
With mighty sums may carry on the trade:
We, broken bankers, half destroy'd by fire,
With our small stock to humble roofs retire:
Pity our loss, while you their pomp admire.
For fame and honour we no longer strive,
We yield in both, and only beg to live:
Unable to support their vast expense,
Who build and treat with such magnificence;
That, like the ambitious monarchs of the age,
They give the law to our provincial stage.
Great neighbours enviously promote excess,
While they impose their splendour on the less.
But only fools, and they of vast estate,
The extremity of modes will imitate,
The dangling knee-fringe, and the bib-cravat.
Yet if some pride with want may be allow'd,
We in our plainness may be justly proud:
Our royal master will'd it should be so;
Whate'er he's pleas'd to own, can need no show:
That sacred name gives ornament and grace,
And, like his stamp, makes basest metals pass.
'Twere folly now a stately pile to raise,
To build a playhouse while you throw down plays,
While scenes, machines, and empty operas reign,
And for the pencil you the pen disdain:
While troops of famish'd Frenchmen hither drive,
And laugh at those upon whose alms they live:
Old English authors vanish, and give place
To these new conquerors of the Norman race

More tamely than your fathers you submit;
You're now grown vassals to them in your wit.
Mark, when they play, how our fine fops advance,
The mighty merits of their men of France,
Keep time, cry Bon, and humour the cadence.
Well, please yourselves; but sure 'tis understood,
That French machines have ne'er done England good.
I would not prophesy our house's fate:
But while vain shows and scenes you overrate,
'Tis to be fear'd . . . . . .
That as a fire the former house o'erthrew,
Machines and tempests will destroy the new.

PROLOGUE TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, 1674. SPOKEN BY MR. HART.*

Poets, your subjects, have their parts assign'd
To unbend, and to divert their sovereign's mind:
When tir'd with following nature, you think fit
To seek repose in the cool shades of wit
And, from the sweet retreat, with joy survey

* Several gentlemen, who had adhered to their principles of loyalty during the usurpation of Cromwell, and the exile of the royal family, being left unprovided for at the Restoration, they applied themselves to different occupations for a livelihood: among them was Mr. Hart, the speaker of this prologue, who had served his majesty as a captain in the civil war, and was now an actor in a capital cast, and in great estimation. *D.*

What rests, and what is conquer'd, of the way.
Here, free yourselves from envy, care, and strife,
You view the various turns of human life:
Safe in our scene, through dangerous courts you go,
And, undebauch'd, the vice of cities know.
Your theories are here to practice brought,
As in mechanic operations wrought;
And man, the little world, before you set,
As once the sphere of chrystal show'd the great.
Blest sure are you above all mortal kind,
If to your fortunes you can suit your mind:
Content to see, and shun, those ills we show,
And crimes on theatres alone to know.
With joy we bring what our dead authors writ,
And beg from you the value of their wit: [claim
That Shakespeare's, Fletcher's, and great Jonson's
May be renew'd from those who gave them fame.
None of our living poets dare appear;
For muses so severe are worshipp'd here,
That, conscious of their faults, they shun the eye,
And, as profane, from sacred places fly,
Rather than see the offended God, and die.
We bring no imperfections but our own;
Such faults as made are by the makers shown:
And you have been so kind, that we may boast,
The greatest judges still can pardon most.
Poets must stoop, when they would please our pit,
Debas'd e'en to the level of their wit;
Disdaining that, which yet they know will take,
Hating themselves what their applause must make.

But when to praise from you they would aspire,
Though they like eagles mount, your Jove is higher.
So far your knowledge all their power transcends,
As what should be beyond what is extends.

PROLOGUE TO CIRCE.*

BY DR. DAVENANT, 1675.

Were you but half so wise as you're severe,
Our youthful poet should not need to fear:
To his green years your censures you would suit,
Not blast the blossom, but expect the fruit.
The sex, that best does pleasure understand,
Will always choose to err on t' other hand.
They check him not that's awkward in delight,
But clap the young rogue's cheek, and set him right.
Thus hearten'd well, and flesh'd upon his prey,
The youth may prove a man another day.
Your Ben and Fletcher, in their first young flight,
Did no Volpone, nor no Arbaces write;
But hopp'd about, and short excursions made
From bough to bough, as if they were afraid,
And each was guilty of some Slighted Maid.
Shakespeare's own muse her Pericles first bore;
The prince of Tyre was elder than the Moor:
'Tis miracle to see a first good play;

* Circe was an opera. Tragedy among the ancients was throughout accompanied with music. *Dr. J. W.*

All hawthorns do not bloom on Christmas-day.
A slender poet must have time to grow,
And spread and burnish as his brothers do.
Who still looks lean, sure with some pox is curst;
But no man can be Falstaff-fat at first.
Then damn not, but indulge his rude essays,
Encourage him, and bloat him up with praise,
That he may get more bulk before he dies:
He's not yet fed enough for sacrifice.
Perhaps, if now your grace you will not grudge,
He may grow up to write, and you to judge.

EPILOGUE,

INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN SPOKEN BY THE LADY HEN. MARWENTWORTH, WHEN CALISTO WAS ACTED AT COURT.

As Jupiter I made my court in vain;
I'll now assume my native shape again.
I'm weary to be so unkindly us'd,
And would not be a god, to be refus'd.
State grows uneasy when it hinders love;
A glorious burden, which the wise remove.
Now, as a nymph, I need not sue, nor try
The force of any lightning but the eye.

[1] *As Jupiter*] It was a sister of the Duchess of Marlborough, a maid of honour, and afterwards Duchess of Tirconnel, celebrated by Grammont, that acted in the Masque of Calisto at court, 1675. *Dr. J. W.*

Beauty and youth more than a god command;
No Jove could e'er the force of these withstand.
'Tis here that sovereign power admits dispute;
Beauty sometimes is justly absolute.
Our sullen Catos, whatsoe'er they say,
E'en while they frown and dictate laws, obey.
You, mighty sir, our bonds more easy make,
And gracefully, what all must suffer, take:
Above those forms the grave affect to wear;
For 'tis not to be wise to be severe.
True wisdom may some gallantry admit,
And soften business with the charms of wit.
These peaceful triumphs with your cares you bought,
And from the midst of fighting nations brought.
You only hear it thunder from afar,
And sit in peace the arbiter of war:
Peace, the loath'd manna, which hot brains despise,
You knew its worth, and made it early prize:
And in its happy leisure sit and see
The promises of more felicity:
Two glorious nymphs of your own godlike line,
Whose morning rays like noontide strike and shine:
Whom you to suppliant monarchs shall dispose,
To bind your friends, and to disarm your foes.

PROLOGUE TO AURENGZEBE

Our author, by experience, finds it true,
'Tis much more hard to please himself than you;
And out of no feign'd modesty, this day
Damns his laborious trifle of a play:
Not that it's worse than what before he writ,
But he has now another taste of wit;
And, to confess a truth, though out of time,
Grows weary of his long-lov'd mistress, Rhyme
Passion's too fierce to be in fetters bound,
And nature flies him like enchanted ground:
What verse can do, he has perform'd in this,
Which he presumes the most correct of his;
But spite of all his pride, a secret shame
Invades his breast at Shakespeare's sacred name:
Aw'd when he hears his godlike Romans rage,
He, in a just despair, would quit the stage;
And to an age less polish'd, more unskill'd,
Does, with disdain, the foremost honours yield.
As with the greater dead he dares not strive,
He would not match his verse with those who live:
Let him retire, betwixt two ages cast,
The first of this, and hindmost of the last.
A losing gamester, let him sneak away;
He bears no ready money from the play.
The fate, which governs poets, thought it fit
He should not raise his fortunes by his wit.

The clergy thrive, and the litigious bar;
Dull heroes fatten with the spoils of war:
All southern vices, heaven be praised, are here;
But wit's a luxury you think too dear.
When you to cultivate the plant are loth,
'Tis a shrewd sign 'twas never of your growth;
And wit in northern climates will not blow,
Except, like orange trees, 'tis hous'd from snow.
There needs no care to put a playhouse down,
'Tis the most desert place of all the town:
We and our neighbours, to speak proudly, are,
Like monarchs, ruin'd with expensive war;
While, like wise English, unconcern'd you sit,
And see us play the tragedy of wit.

EPILOGUE TO THE MAN OF MODE;

OR, SIR FOPLING FLUTTER. BY SIR GEORGE ETHEREGE, 1676.

Most modern wits such monstrous fools have shown,
They seem not of heaven's making, but their own.
Those nauseous harlequins in farce may pass;
But there goes more to a substantial ass:
Something of man must be expos'd to view,
That, gallants, they may more resemble you.
Sir Fopling is a fool so nicely writ,
The ladies would mistake him for a wit;

And, when he sings, talks loud, and cocks, would cry,
I vow, methinks he's pretty company:
So brisk, so gay, so travell'd, so refin'd,
As he took pains to graff upon his kind.
True fops help nature's work, and go to school,
To file and finish God Almighty's fool.
Yet none Sir Fopling him, or him can call;
He's knight o' the shire, and represents ye all.
From each he meets he culls whate'er he can;
Legion's his name, a people in a man.
His bulky folly gathers as it goes,
And, rolling o'er you, like a snowball grows.
His various modes from various fathers follow;
One taught the toss, and one the new French wallow:
His swordknot this, his cravat that design'd;
And this, the yard-long snake he twirls behind.
From one the sacred periwig he gain'd,
Which wind ne'er blew, nor touch of hat profan'd.
Another's diving bow he did adore,
Which with a shog casts all the hair before,
Till he with full decorum brings it back,
And rises with a water-spaniel shake.
As for his songs, the ladies' dear delight,
These sure he took from most of you who write.
Yet every man is safe from what he fear'd;
For no one fool is hunted from the herd.

EPILOGUE TO ALL FOR LOVE.

Poets, like disputants, when reasons fail,
Have one sure refuge left—and that's to rail.
Fop, coxcomb, fool, are thunder'd through the pit;
And this is all their equipage of wit.
We wonder how the devil this difference grows,
Betwixt our fools in verse, and yours in prose:
For, 'faith, the quarrel rightly understood,
'Tis civil war with their own flesh and blood.
The threadbare author hates the gaudy coat;
And swears at the gilt coach, but swears afoot:
For 'tis observ'd of every scribbling man,
He grows a fop as fast as e'er he can;
Prunes up, and asks his oracle, the glass,
If pink and purple best become his face.
For our poor wretch, he neither rails nor prays;
Nor likes your wit just as you like his plays;
He has not yet so much of Mr. Bayes.
He does his best; and if he cannot please,
Would quietly sue out his writ of ease.
Yet, if he might his own grand jury call,
By the fair sex he begs to stand or fall.
Let Cæsar's power the men's ambition move,
But grace you him who lost the world for love!
Yet if some antiquated lady say,
The last age is not copied in his play;

Heaven help the man who for that face must drudge,
Which only has the wrinkles of a judge.
Let not the young and beauteous join with those;
For should you raise such numerous hosts of foes,
Young wits and sparks he to his aid must call;
'Tis more than one man's work to please you all.

PROLOGUE TO LIMBERHAM.

True wit has seen its best days long ago;
It ne'er look'd up, since we were dipt in show;
When sense in doggerel rhymes and clouds was lost,
And dulness flourish'd at the actor's cost.
Nor stopt it here; when tragedy was done,
Satire and humour the same fate have run,
And comedy is sunk to trick and pun.
Now our machining lumber will not sell,
And you no longer care for heaven or hell;
What stuff can please you next, the Lord can tell.
Let them, who the rebellion first began
To wit, restore the monarch, if they can;
Our author dares not be the first bold man.
He, like the prudent citizen, takes care
To keep for better marts his staple ware;
His toys are good enough for Sturbridge fair.
Tricks were the fashion; if it now be spent,
'Tis time enough at Easter to invent;
No man will make up a new suit for Lent.

If now and then he takes a small pretence,
To forage for a little wit and sense,
Pray pardon him, he meant you no offence.
Next summer, Nostradamus tells, they say,
That all the critics shall be shipp'd away,
And not enow be left to damn a play.
To every sail beside, good heaven, be kind;
But drive away that swarm with such a wind,
That not one locust may be left behind!

EPILOGUE TO MITHRIDATES,

KING OF PONTUS. BY MR. N. LEE, 1678.

You've seen a pair of faithful lovers die:
And much you care; for most of you will cry,
'Twas a just judgment on their constancy.
For, heaven be thank'd, we live in such an age,
When no man dies for love, but on the stage:
And e'en those martyrs are but rare in plays;
A cursed sign how much true faith decays.
Love is no more a violent desire;
'Tis a mere metaphor, a painted fire.
In all our sex, the name examin'd well,
'Tis pride to gain, and vanity to tell.
In woman, 'tis of subtle interest made:
Curse on the punk that made it first a trade!
She first did wit's prerogative remove,
And made a fool presume to prate of love.

Let honour and preferment go for gold
But glorious beauty is not to be sold:
Or, if it be, 'tis at a rate so high,
That nothing but adoring it should buy.
Yet the rich cullies may their boasting spare;
They purchase but sophisticated ware.
'Tis prodigality that buys deceit,
Where both the giver and the taker cheat.
Men but refine on the old half crown way;
And women fight, like Swissers, for their pay.

PROLOGUE TO ŒDIPUS.

When Athens all the Grecian state did guide,
And Greece gave laws to all the world beside;
Then Sophocles with Socrates did sit,
Supreme in wisdom one, and one in wit:
And wit from wisdom differ'd not in those,
But as 'twas sung in verse, or said in prose,
Then, Œdipus, on crowded theatres,
Drew all admiring eyes and list'ning ears:
The pleas'd spectator shouted every line,
The noblest, manliest, and the best design!
And every critic of each learned age,
By this just model has reform'd the stage.
Now, should it fail, (as heaven avert our fear)
Damn it in silence, lest the world should hear.
For were it known this poem did not please,
You might set up for perfect savages:

Your neighbours would not look on you as men,
But think the nation all turn'd Picts again.
Faith, as you manage matters, 'tis not fit
You should suspect yourselves of too much wit:
Drive not the jest too far, but spare this piece;
And, for this once, be not more wise than Greece.
See twice! do not pellmell to damning fall,
Like true born Britons, who ne'er think at all:
Pray be advis'd; and though at Mons you won,
On pointed cannon do not always run.
With some respect to ancient wit proceed;
You take the four first councils for your creed.
But, when you lay tradition wholly by,
And on the private spirit alone rely,
You turn fanatics in your poetry.
If, notwithstanding all that we can say,
You needs will have your penn'orths of the play,
And come resolv'd to damn, because you pay,
Record it, in memorial of the fact,
The first play buried since the woollen act.

EPILOGUE TO ŒDIPUS.

What Sophocles could undertake alone,
Our poets found a work for more than one;
And therefore two lay tugging at the piece,
With all their force, to draw the ponderous mass
from Greece;
A weight that bent e'en Seneca's strong muse,

And which Corneille's shoulders did refuse.
So hard it is the Athenian harp to string!
So much two consuls yield to one just king.
Terror and pity this whole poem sway;
The mightiest machines that can mount a play.
How heavy will those vulgar souls be found,
Whom two such engines cannot move from ground!
When Greece and Rome have smil'd upon this birth,
You can but damn for one poor spot of earth:
And when your children find your judgment such,
They'll scorn their sires, and wish themselves born Dutch;
Each haughty poet will infer with ease,
How much his wit must underwrite to please.
As some strong churl would, brandishing, advance
The monumental sword that conquer'd France;
So you, by judging this, your judgment teach,
Thus far you like, that is, thus far you reach.
Since then the vote of full two thousand years
Has crown'd this plot, and all the dead are theirs,
Think it a debt you pay, not alms you give,
And, in your own defence, let this Play live.
Think them not vain, when Sophocles is shown,
To praise his worth they humbly doubt their own.
Yet as weak states each other's power assure,
Weak poets by conjunction are secure.
Their treat is what your palates relish most,
Charm! song! and show! a murder and a ghost!
We know not what you can desire or hope,
To please you more, but burning of a Pope.

PROLOGUE TO TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

SPOKEN BY MR. BETTERTON, REPRESENTING THE GHOST OF SHAKESPEARE.

See, my lov'd Britons, see your Shakespeare rise,
An awful ghost confess'd to human eyes!
Unnam'd, methinks, distinguish'd I had been
From other shades, by this eternal green,
About whose wreaths the vulgar poets strive,
And with a touch their wither'd bays revive.
Untaught, unpractis'd, in a barbarous age,
I found not, but created first the stage.
And, if I drain'd no Greek or Latin store,
'Twas, that my own abundance gave me more.
On foreign trade I needed not rely,
Like fruitful Britain, rich without supply.
In this my rough drawn play you shall behold
Some master strokes, so manly and so bold,
That he who meant to alter, found 'em such,
He shook, and thought it sacrilege to touch.
Now, where are the successors to my name?
What bring they to fill out a poet's fame?
Weak, short liv'd issues of a feeble age;
Scarce living to be christen'd on the stage!
For humour farce, for love they rhyme dispense,
That tolls the knell for their departed sense.
Dulness might thrive in any trade but this
'Twould recommend to some fat benefice.

Dulness, that in a playhouse meets disgrace,
Might meet with reverence in its proper place.
The fulsome clench, that nauseates the town,
Would from a judge or alderman go down,
Such virtue is there in a robe and gown!
And that insipid stuff which here you hate,
Might somewhere else be call'd a grave debate;
Dulness is decent in the church and state.
But I forget that still 'tis understood,
Bad plays are best decried by showing good.
Sit silent then, that my pleas'd soul may see
A judging audience once, and worthy me;
My faithful scene from true records shall tell,
How Trojan valour did the Greek excel;
Your great forefathers shall their fame regain,
And Homer's angry ghost repine in vain.

PROLOGUE TO CÆSAR BORGIA.

BY MR. N. LEE, 1680.

The unhappy man, who once has trail'd a pen,
Lives not to please himself, but other men;
Is always drudging, wastes his life and blood,
Yet only eats and drinks what you think good.

[1] *The unhappy man*] Lee had so melodious a voice, and such pathetic elocution, that reading one of his own scenes to Major Mohun at a rehearsal, Mohun, in the warmth of his admiration, threw down his part, and exclaimed, 'Unless

What praise soe'er the poetry deserve,
Yet every fool can bid the poet starve.
That fumbling lecher to revenge is bent,
Because he thinks himself or whore is meant:
Name but a cuckold, all the city swarms;
From Leadenhall to Ludgate is in arms:
Were there no fear of Antichrist, or France,
In the blest time poor poets live by chance.
Either you come not here, or, as you grace
Some old acquaintance, drop into the place,
Careless and qualmish with a yawning face:
You sleep o'er wit, and by my troth you may;
Most of your talents lie another way.
You love to hear of some prodigious tale,
The bell that toll'd alone, or Irish whale.
News is your food, and you enough provide,
Both for yourselves, and all the world beside.
One theatre there is of vast resort,
Which whilom of Requests was call'd the Court;
But now the great Exchange of News 'tis hight,
And full of hum and buzz from noon till night.
Up stairs and down you run, as for a race,
And each man wears three nations in his face.
So big you look, though claret you retrench,

I were able to play it as well as you read it, to what purpose should I undertake it.' Yet it is a very remarkable circumstance, that Lee failed as an actor in attempting to perform the character of Duncan in Macbeth, 1672. As did Otway in a play of Mrs. Afra Behn, entitled the Jealous Bridegroom. After this failure, the first wrote his Alcibiades, and the last mentioned author his Nero. *Dr. J. W*

That, arm'd with bottled ale, you huff the French.
But all your entertainment still is fed
By villains in your own dull island bred.
Would you return to us, we dare engage
To show you better rogues upon the stage.
You know no poison but plain ratsbane here;
Death's more refin'd, and better bred elsewhere.
They have a civil way in Italy,
By smelling a perfume to make you die;
A trick would make you lay your snuffbox by.
Murder's a trade, so known and practis'd there,
That 'tis infallible as is the chair.
But, mark their feast, you shall behold such pranks;
The pope says grace, but 'tis the devil gives thanks.

PROLOGUE TO SOPHONISBA, AT OXFORD, 1680.

Thespis, the first professor of our art,
At country wakes sung ballads from a cart.
To prove this true, if Latin be no trespass,
Dicitur et plaustris vexisse Poemata Thespis.
But Æschylus, says Horace in some page,
Was the first mountebank that trod the stage:
Yet Athens never knew your learned sport
Of tossing poets in a tennis-court.
But 'tis the talent of our English nation,
Still to be plotting some new reformation;

And few years hence, if anarchy goes on,
Jack Presbyter shall here erect his throne,
Knock out a tub with preaching once a day,
And every prayer be longer than a play.
Then all your heathen wits shall go to pot,
For disbelieving of a Popish-plot:
Your poets shall be us'd like infidels,
And worst, the author of the Oxford bells:
Nor should we scape the sentence, to depart,
E'en in our first original, a cart.
No zealous brother there would want a stone,
To maul us cardinals, and pelt Pope Joan:
Religion, learning, wit, would be suppress'd,
Rags of the whore, and trappings of the beast
Scot, Suarez, Tom of Aquin, must go down,
As chief supporters of the triple crown;
And Aristotle's for destruction ripe;
Some say, he call'd the soul an organ-pipe,
Which, by some little help of derivation,
Shall then be prov'd a pipe of inspiration.

A PROLOGUE.

If yet there be a few that take delight
In that which reasonable men should write,
To them alone we dedicate this night.
The rest may satisfy their curious itch,
With city gazettes, or some factious speech,

Or whate'er libel, for the public good,
Stirs up the Shrovetide crew to fire and blood.
Remove your benches, you apostate pit,
And take, above, twelve pennyworth of wit;
Go back to your dear dancing on the rope,
Or see what's worse, the devil and the pope.
The plays that take on our corrupted stage,
Methinks, resemble the distracted age;
Noise, madness, all unreasonable things,
That strike at sense, as rebels do at kings.
The style of forty-one our poets write,
And you are grown to judge like forty-eight.
Such censures our mistaking audience make,
That 'tis almost grown scandalous to take.
They talk of fevers that infect the brains;
But nonsense is the new disease that reigns.
Weak stomachs, with a long disease oppress'd,
Cannot the cordials of strong wit digest.
Therefore thin nourishment of farce ye choose,
Decoctions of a barley-water muse:
A meal of tragedy would make ye sick,
Unless it were a very tender chick.
Some scenes in sippets would be worth our time;
Those would go down; some love that's p ach'd [in rhyme;
If these should fail. . . .
We must lie down, and, after all our cost,
Keep holiday, like watermen in frost;
While you turn players on the world's great stage,
And act yourselves the farce of your own age.

PROLOGUE TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, 1681.

The fam'd Italian muse, whose rhymes advance
Orlando and the Paladins of France,
Records that, when our wit and sense is flown,
'Tis lodg'd within the circle of the moon,
In earthen jars, which one, who thither soar'd,
Set to his nose, snuff'd up, and was restor'd.
Whate'er the story be, the moral's true;
The wit we lost in town we find in you.
Our poets their fled parts may draw from hence,
And fill their windy heads with sober sense.
When London votes with Southwark's disagree,
Here may they find their long-lost loyalty.
Here busy senates, to the old cause inclin'd,
May snuff the votes their fellows left behind:
Your country neighbours, when their grain grows dear,
May come, and find their last provision here:
Whereas we cannot much lament our loss,
Who neither carried back, nor brought one cross
We look'd what representatives would bring;
But they help'd us, just as they did the king.
Yet we despair not; for we now lay forth
The Sibyl's books to those who know their worth;
And though the first was sacrific'd before,
These volumes doubly will the price restore.

Our poet bade us hope this grace to find,
To whom by long prescription you are kind.
He, whose undaunted Muse, with loyal rage,
Has never spar'd the vices of the age,
Here finding nothing that his spleen can raise,
Is forc'd to turn his satire into praise.

PROLOGUE TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS,

UPON HIS FIRST APPEARANCE AT THE DUKE'S THEATRE, AFTER HIS RETURN FROM SCOTLAND, 1682.

In those cold regions which no summers cheer,
Where brooding darkness covers half the year,
To hollow caves the shivering natives go;
Bears range abroad, and hunt in tracks of snow:
But when the tedious twilight wears away,
And stars grow paler at the approach of day,
The longing crowds to frozen mountains run:
Happy who first can see the glimmering sun:
The surly savage offspring disappear,
And curse the bright successor of the year.
Yet, though rough bears in covert seek defence,
White foxes stay, with seeming innocence:
That crafty kind with daylight can dispense.
Still we are throng'd so full with Reynard's race,
That loyal subjects scarce can find a place:
Thus modest truth is cast behind the crowd:
Truth speaks too low; Hypocrisy too loud.

Let them be first to flatter in success;
Duty can stay, but guilt has need to press.
Once, when true zeal the sons of God did call,
To make their solemn show at heaven's Whitehall,
The fawning devil appear'd among the rest,
And made as good a courtier as the best.
The friends of Job, who rail'd at him before,
Came cap in hand when he had three times more.
Yet late repentance may, perhaps, be true;
Kings can forgive, if rebels can but sue:
A tyrant's power in rigour is express'd;
The father yearns in the true prince's breast.
We grant, an o'ergrown Whig no grace can mend;
But most are babes, that know not they offend.
The crowd to restless motion still inclin'd,
Are clouds, that tack according to the wind.
Driven by their chiefs they storms of hailstones pour;
Then mourn, and soften to a silent shower.
O welcome to this much-offending land,
The prince that brings forgiveness in his hand!
Thus angels on glad messages appear:
Their first salute commands us not to fear:
Thus Heaven, that could constrain us to obey,
(With reverence if we might presume to say)
Seems to relax the rights of sovereign sway:
Permits to man the choice of good and ill,
And makes us happy by our own free-will.

PROLOGUE TO THE EARL OF ESSEX.

BY MR. J. BANKS, 1682.

SPOKEN TO THE KING AND THE QUEEN AT THEIR COMING TO THE HOUSE.

When first the ark was landed on the shore,
And Heaven had vow'd to curse the ground no more;
When tops of hills the longing patriarch saw,
And the new scene of earth began to draw;
The dove was sent to view the waves decrease,
And first brought back to man the pledge of peace.
'Tis needless to apply, when those appear,
Who bring the olive, and who plant it here.
We have before our eyes the royal dove,
Still innocent, as harbinger of love:
The ark is open'd to dismiss the train,
And people with a better race the plain.
Tell me, ye powers, why should vain man pursue,
With endless toil, each object that is new,
And for the seeming substance leave the true?
Why should he quit for hopes his certain good,
And loath the manna of his daily food?
Must England still the scene of changes be,
Tost and tempestuous, like our ambient sea?
Must still our weather and our wills agree?
Without our blood our liberties we have:

Who that is free would fight to be a slave?
Or, what can wars to aftertimes assure,
Of which our present age is not secure?
All that our monarch would for us ordain,
Is but to enjoy the blessings of his reign.
Our land's an Eden, and the main's our fence,
While we preserve our state of innocence:
That lost, then beasts their brutal force employ
And first their lord, and then themselves destroy.
What civil broils have cost we know too well;
Oh! let it be enough that once we fell!
And every heart conspire, and every tongue,
Still to have such a king, and this king long.

AN EPILOGUE FOR THE KING'S HOUSE.

We act by fits and starts, like drowning men,
But just peep up, and then pop down again.
Let those who call us wicked change their sense;
For never men liv'd more on Providence.
Not lottery cavaliers are half so poor,
Nor broken cits, nor a vacation whore.
Not courts, nor courtiers living on the rents
Of the three last ungiving parliaments:
So wretched, that, if Pharaoh could divine,
He might have spar'd his dream of seven lean kine,
And chang'd his vision for the Muses nine.
The comet, that, they say, portends a dearth,

Was but a vapour drawn from playhouse earth:
Pent there since our last fire, and, Lilly says,
Foreshows our change of state, and thin third-days.
'Tis not our want of wit that keeps us poor;
For then the printer's press would suffer more.
Their pamphleteers each day their venom spit;
They thrive by treason, and we starve by wit.
Confess the truth, which of you has not laid
Four farthings out to buy the Hatfield maid?
Or, which is duller yet, and more would spite us,
Democritus his wars with Heraclitus?
Such are the authors who have run us down,
And exercis'd you critics of the town.
Yet these are pearls to your lampooning rhymes,
Y' abuse yourselves more dully than the times.
Scandal, the glory of the English nation,
Is worn to rags, and scribbled out of fashion.
Such harmless thrusts, as if, like fencers wise,
They had agreed their play before their prize.
Faith, they may hang their harps upon the willows;
'Tis just like children when they box with pillows.
Then put an end to civil wars for shame;
Let each knight-errant, who has wrong'd a dame,
Throw down his pen, and give her, as he can,
The satisfaction of a gentleman.

PROLOGUE TO THE LOYAL BROTHER:*

OR, THE PERSIAN PRINCE. BY MR. SOUTHERNE, 1682.

Poets, like lawful monarchs, rul'd the stage,
Till critics, like damn'd Whigs, debauch'd our age.
Mark how they jump: critics would regulate
Our theatres, and Whigs reform our state:
Both pretend love, and both (plague rot them!) hate.
The critic humbly seems advice to bring;
The fawning Whig petitions to the king:
But one's advice into a satire slides;
T' other's petition a remonstrance hides.
These will no taxes give, and those no pence;
Critics would starve the poet, Whigs the prince.
The critic all our troops of friends discards;
Just so the Whig would fain pull down the guards.
Guards are illegal, that drive foes away,
As watchful shepherds, that fright beasts of prey.
Kings, who disband such needless aids as these,
Are safe—as long as e'er their subjects please:
And that would be till next Queen Bess's night:

* The Loyal Brother, or the Persian Prince, Mr. Southerne's first play, was acted at Drury Lane in 1682; a time in which the Tory interest, after long struggles, carried all before it. The character of the Loyal Brother was a compliment intended for the Duke of York. This prologue is a continued invective against the Whigs. *D.*

18 *Queen Bess's night*] At the King's Head Tavern, the corner of Chancery Lane, and opposite the Inner Temple

Which thus grave penny chroniclers indite.
Sir Edmondbury first, in woful wise,
Leads up the show, and milks their maudlin eyes.
There's not a butcher's wife but dribs her part,
And pities the poor pageant from her heart;
Who, to provoke revenge, rides round the fire,

gate, the principal opponents to the court-measures and the chiefs of the Whig party assembled, under the name of the King's Head Club, and afterwards the Green Ribbon Club, from ribbons of that colour which they wore in their hats. Here they subscribed a guinea apiece for a bonfire, in which the effigies of the pope was to be burnt on the 17th of November, being the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's birth, with more than ordinary pomp; for it was heretofore an annual ceremony, usually made without any remarkable parade. The procession now consisted of one representing the dead body of Sir Edmundbury Godfrey, carried on a horse, with a person preceding it ringing a bell, to remind people of his murder: then followed a mob of fellows, dressed like carmelites, jesuits, bishops, cardinals, &c. and several boys with incense pots surrounding an image of the pope, with that of the devil just behind him,

'Like thief and parson in a Tyburn cart.'

In this manner they marched from Bishopsgate to the corner of Chancery Lane, where they committed the inoffensive effigies to the flames; while the balconies and windows of the King's Head were filled with people of consequence, who countenanced the tumult; which, the Hon. Roger North says, struck a terror upon people's spirits. The year of acting the play, to which we have here a prologue, great additions, alterations, and expensive improvements were intended to be made in this procession, which was prevented entirely by the loyalty and vigilance of the sheriffs of the city, Sir Dudley North and Sir Peter Rich, who paraded the streets all day and the best part of the night. *D.*

And, with a civil congé, does retire :
But guiltless blood to ground must never fall ;
There's Antichrist behind, to pay for all.
The punk of Babylon in pomp appears,
A lewd old gentleman of seventy years :
Whose age in vain our mercy would implore ;
For few take pity on an old cast whore. [part ;
The devil, who brought him to the shame, takes
Sits cheek by jowl, in black, to cheer his heart ;
Like thief and parson in a Tyburn cart.
The word is given, and with a loud huzza
The mitred puppet from his chair they draw :
On the slain corpse contending nations fall :
Alas ! what's one poor pope among them all !
He burns ; now all true hearts your triumphs ring :
And next, for fashion, cry, God save the king.
A needful cry in midst of such alarms,
When forty thousand men are up in arms.
But after he's once saved, to make amends,
In each succeeding health they damn his friends :
So God begins, but still the devil ends.
What if some one, inspired with zeal, should call,
Come, let's go cry, God save him, at Whitehall ?
His best friends would not like this over-care,
Or think him e'er the safer for this prayer.
Five praying saints are by an act allow'd ;
But not the whole church-militant in crowd.
Yet, should Heaven all the true petitions drain
Of Presbyterians, who would kings maintain,
Of forty thousand, five would scarce remain.

PROLOGUE TO THE KING AND QUEEN,

UPON THE UNION OF THE TWO COMPANIES IN 1682.

Since faction ebbs, and rogues grow out of fashion,
Their penny scribes take care to inform the nation,
How well men thrive in this or that plantation :

How Pensylvania's air agrees with Quakers,
And Carolina's with Associators :
Both e'en too good for madmen and for traitors.

Truth is, our land with saints is so run o'er,
And every age produces such a store,
That now there's need of two New Englands more.

What's this, you'll say, to us and our vocation ?
Only thus much, that we have left our station,
And made this theatre our new plantation.

The factious natives never could agree ;
But aiming, as they call'd it, to be free,
Those playhouse Whigs set up for property.

Some say, they no obedience paid of late ;
But would new fears and jealousies create ;
Till topsy-turvy they had turn'd the state.

Plain sense, without the talent of foretelling,
Might guess 'twould end in downright knocks and quelling :
For seldom comes there better of rebelling.

When men will, needlessly, their freedom barter
For lawless power, sometimes they catch a Tartar;
There's a damn'd word that rhymes to this, call'd
Charter.

But, since the victory with us remains,
You shall be call'd to twelve in all our gains;
If you'll not think us saucy for our pains.

Old men shall have good old plays to delight 'em:
And you, fair ladies and gallants, that slight 'em,
We'll treat with good new plays: if our new wits
can write 'em.

We'll take no blundering verse, no fustian tumour,
No dribbling love, from this or that presumer;
No dull fat fool shamm'd on the stage for humour.

For, faith, some of 'em such vile stuff have made,
As none but fools or fairies ever play'd;
But 'twas, as shopmen say, to force a trade.

We've given you Tragedies, all sense defying,
And singing men, in woful metre dying;
This 'tis when heavy lubbers will be flying.

All these disasters we well hope to weather;
We bring you none of our old lumber hither:
Whig poets and Whig sheriffs may hang together.

PROLOGUE TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

SPOKEN BY MR. HART, AT THE ACTING OF THE SILENT WOMAN.

WHAT Greece, when learning flourish'd, only knew,
Athenian judges, you this day renew.
Here too are annual rites to Pallas done,
And here poetic prizes lost or won.
Methinks I see you, crown'd with olives, sit,
And strike a sacred horror from the pit.
A day of doom is this of your decree,
Where e'en the best are but by mercy free:
A day, which none but Jonson durst have wish'd to see.
Here they, who long have known the useful stage,
Come to be taught themselves to teach the age.
As your commissioners our poets go,
To cultivate the virtue which you sow;
In your Lycæum first themselves refin'd,
And delegated thence to humankind.
But as ambassadors, when long from home,
For new instructions to their princes come;
So poets, who your precepts have forgot,
Return, and beg they may be better taught:
Follies and faults elsewhere by them are shown,
But by your manners they correct their own.
The illiterate writer, empiric-like, applies

To minds diseas'd, unsafe, chance, remedies:
The learn'd in schools, where knowledge first began,
Studies with care the anatomy of man;
Sees virtue, vice, and passions in their cause,
And fame from science, not from fortune, draws.
So Poetry, which is in Oxford made
An art, in London only is a trade.
There haughty dunces, whose unlearned pen
Could ne'er spell grammar, would be reading men.
Such build their poems the Lucretian way;
So many huddled atoms make a play;
And if they hit in order by some chance,
They call that nature, which is ignorance.
To such a fame let mere town-wits aspire,
And their gay nonsense their own cits admire.
Our poet, could he find forgiveness here,
Would wish it rather than a plaudit there.
He owns no crown from those Prætorian bands,
But knows that right is in the senate's hands,
Not impudent enough to hope your praise,
Low at the Muses' feet his wreath he lays,
And, where he took it up, resigns his bays.
Kings make their poets whom themselves think fit,
But 'tis your suffrage makes authentic wit.

EPILOGUE,

SPOKEN BY THE SAME.

No poor Dutch peasant, wing'd with all his fear,
Flies with more haste, when the French arms draw near,
Than we with our poetic train come down,
For refuge hither, from the infected town:
Heaven for our sins this summer has thought fit
To visit us with all the plagues of wit.
A French troop first swept all things in its way;
But those hot Monsieurs were too quick to stay:
Yet, to our cost, in that short time, we find
They left their itch of novelty behind.
The Italian merry-andrews took their place,
And quite debauch'd the stage with lewd grimace:
Instead of wit, and humours, your delight
Was there to see two hobby-horses fight;
Stout Scaramoucha with rush lance rode in,
And ran a tilt at centaur Arlequin.
For love you heard how amorous asses bray'd,
And cats in gutters gave their serenade.
Nature was out of countenance, and each day
Some new-born monster shown you for a play.
But when all fail'd, to strike the stage quite dumb,
Those wicked engines call'd machines are come.
Thunder and lightning now for wit are play'd,

And shortly scenes in Lapland will be laid:
Art magic is for poetry profest;
And cats and dogs, and each obscener beast,
To which Ægyptian dotards once did bow
Upon our English stage are worshipp'd now.
Witchcraft reigns there, and raises to renown
Macbeth and Simon Magus of the town,
Fletcher's despis'd, your Jonson's out of fashion,
And wit the only drug in all the nation.
In this low ebb our wares to you are shown;
By you those staple authors' worth is known;
For wit's a manufacture of your own.
When you, who only can, their scenes have prais'd,
We'll boldly back, and say, their price is rais'd.

EPILOGUE,

SPOKEN AT OXFORD, BY MRS. MARSHALL.

Oft has our poet wish'd, this happy seat
Might prove his fading Muse's last retreat:
I wonder'd at his wish, but now I find
He sought for quiet, and content of mind;
Which noiseful towns and courts can never know,
And only in the shades like laurels grow.
Youth, ere it sees the world, here studies rest,
And age returning thence concludes it best.
What wonder if we court that happiness

Yearly to share, which hourly you possess.
Teaching e'en you, while the vext world we show,
Your peace to value more, and better know?
'Tis all we can return for favours past,
Whose holy memory shall ever last,
For patronage from him whose care presides
O'er every noble art, and every science guides:
Bathurst, a name the learn'd with reverence know,
And scarcely more to his own Virgil owe;
Whose age enjoys but what his youth deserv'd,
To rule those Muses whom before he serv'd.
His learning, and untainted manners too,
We find, Athenians, are deriv'd to you:
Such ancient hospitality there rests
In yours, as dwelt in the first Grecian breasts,
Whose kindness was religion to their guests.
Such modesty did to our sex appear,
As, had there been no laws, we need not fear,
Since each of you was our protector here.
Converse so chaste, and so strict virtue shown,
As might Apollo with the Muses own.
Till our return, we must despair to find
Judges so just, so knowing, and so kind.

PROLOGUE TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

Discord and plots, which have undone our age,
With the same ruin have o'erwhelm'd the stage.
Our house has suffer'd in the common woe,

We have been troubled with Scotch rebels too.
Our brethren are from Thames to Tweed departed
And of our sisters all the kinder-hearted
To Edinburgh gone, or coach'd, or carted.
With bonny bluecap there they act all night
For Scotch halfcrown, in English threepence hight.
One nymph, to whom fat Sir John Falstaff's lean,
There with her single person fills the scene.
Another, with long use and age decay'd,
Div'd here old woman, and rose there a maid.
Our trusty doorkeepers of former time
There strut and swagger in heroic rhyme.
Tack but a copper-lace to drugget suit,
And there's a hero made without dispute:
And that, which was a capon's tail before,
Becomes a plume for Indian emperor.
But all his subjects, to express the care
Of imitation, go, like Indians, bare:
Lac'd linen there would be a dangerous thing;
It might perhaps a new rebellion bring;
The Scot, who wore it, would be chosen king.
But why should I these renegades describe,
When you yourselves have seen a lewder tribe?
Teague has been here, and, to this learned pit,
With Irish action slander'd English wit:
You have beheld such barbarous Macs appear,
As merited a second massacre:
Such as, like Cain, were branded with disgrace,
And had their country stamp'd upon their face.

When strollers durst presume to pick your purse,
We humbly thought our broken troop not worse.
How ill soe'er our action may deserve,
Oxford's a place where wit can never starve.

PROLOGUE TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

Though actors cannot much of learning boast,
Of all who want it, we admire it most:
We love the praises of a learned pit,
As we remotely are allied to wit.
We speak our poet's wit, and trade in ore,
Like those, who touch upon the golden shore:
Betwixt our judges can distinction make,
Discern how much, and why, our poems take:
Mark if the fools, or men of sense, rejoice;
Whether the applause be only sound or voice.
When our fop gallants, or our city folly
Clap over-loud, it makes us melancholy:
We doubt that scene which does their wonder raise,
And, for their ignorance, contemn their praise.
Judge then, if we who act, and they who write,
Should not be proud of giving you delight.
London likes grossly; but this nicer pit
Examines, fathoms all the depths of wit;
The ready finger lays on every blot; [not.
Knows what should justly please, and what should
Nature herself lies open to your view;

You judge by her, what draught of her is true,
Where outlines false, and colours seem too faint,
Where bunglers daub, and where true poets paint.
But, by the sacred genius of this place,
By every Muse, by each domestic grace,
Be kind to wit, which but endeavours well,
And, where you judge, presumes not to excel.
Our poets hither for adoption come,
As nations sued to be made free of Rome:
Not in the suffragating tribes to stand,
But in your utmost, last, provincial band.
If his ambition may those hopes pursue,
Who with religion loves your arts and you,
Oxford to him a dearer name shall be,
Than his own mother-university.
Thebes did his green, unknowing, youth engage;
He chooses Athens in his riper age.

PROLOGUE TO ALBION AND ALBANIUS.

Full twenty years and more, our labouring stage
Has lost on this incorrigible age:
Our poets, the John Ketches of the nation,
Have seem'd to lash ye, even to excoriation:
But still no sign remains; which plainly notes,
You bore like heroes, or you bribed like Oates.
What can we do, when mimicking a fop,
Like beating nut trees, makes a larger crop?

Faith, we'll e'en spare our pains! and, to content you,
Will fairly leave you what your Maker meant you.
Satire was once your physic, wit your food;
One nourish'd not, and t'other drew no blood:
We now prescribe, like doctors in despair,
The diet your weak appetites can bear.
Since hearty beef and mutton will not do,
Here's julap-dance, ptisan of song and show:
Give you strong sense, the liquor is too heady;
You're come to farce,—that's asses' milk,—already.
Some hopeful youths there are, of callow wit,
Who one day may be men, if heaven think fit;
Sound may serve such, ere they to sense are grown,
Like leading-strings, till they can walk alone.
But yet, to keep our friends in countenance, know,
The wise Italians first invented show;
Thence into France the noble pageant pass'd:
'Tis England's credit to be cozen'd last.
Freedom and zeal have chous'd you o'er and o'er:
Pray give us leave to bubble you once more;
You never were so cheaply fool'd before:
We bring you change, to humour your disease;
Change for the worse has ever used to please:
Then, 'tis the mode of France; without whose rules
None must presume to set up here for fools.
In France, the oldest man is always young,
Sees operas daily, learns the tunes so long,
Till foot, hand, head, keep time with every song:

Each sings his part, echoing from pit and box,
With his hoarse voice, half harmony, half pox.
Le plus grand roi du monde is always ringing,
They show themselves good subjects by their sing-
On that condition, set up every throat; [ing:
You whigs may sing, for you have chang'd your note.
Cits and citesses raise a joyful strain,
'Tis a good omen to begin a reign;
Voices may help your charter to restoring,
And get by singing what you lost by roaring.

EPILOGUE TO ALBION AND ALBANIUS.

After our Æsop's fable shown to-day,
I come to give the moral of the play.
Feign'd Zeal, you saw, set out the speedier pace;
But the last heat, Plain Dealing won the race:
Plain Dealing for a jewel has been known;
But ne'er till now the jewel of a crown.
When heaven made man, to show the work divine,
Truth was his image, stamp'd upon the coin:
And when a king is to a god refined,
On all he says and does he stamps his mind:
This proves a soul without alloy, and pure;
Kings, like their gold, should every touch endure.
To dare in fields is valour; but how few
Dare be so thoroughly valiant,—to be true!
The name of great let other kings affect:
He's great indeed, the prince that is direct.

His subjects know him now, and trust him more
Than all their kings, and all their laws before.
What safety could their public acts afford?
Those he can break; but cannot break his word.
So great a trust to him alone was due;
Well have they trusted whom so well they knew.
The saint, who walk'd on waves, securely trod,
While he believed the beck'ning of his God;
But when his faith no longer bore him out,
Began to sink, as he began to doubt.
Let us our native character maintain;
'Tis of our growth, to be sincerely plain.
To excel in truth we loyally may strive,
Set privilege against prerogative:
He plights his faith, and we believe him just;
His honour is to promise, ours to trust.
Thus Britain's basis on a word is laid,
As by a word the world itself was made

PROLOGUE TO ARVIRAGUS AND PHILICIA

REVIVED, BY LODOWICK CARLELL, ESQ.

SPOKEN BY MR. HART.

With sickly actors and an old house too,
We're match'd with glorious theatres and new,
And with our alehouse scenes, and clothes bare worn,
Can neither raise old plays, nor new adorn.
If all these ills could not undo us quite,

A brisk French troop is grown your dear delight;
Who with broad bloody bills call you each day,
To laugh and break your buttons at their play;
Or see some serious piece, which we presume
Is fallen from some incomparable plume;
And therefore, Messieurs, if you'll do us grace,
Send lackeys early to preserve your place.
We dare not on your privilege intrench,
Or ask you why you like them? they are French.
Therefore some go with courtesy exceeding,
Neither to hear nor see, but show their breeding:
Each lady striving to out-laugh the rest;
To make it seem they understood the jest.
Their countrymen come in, and nothing pay,
To teach us English were to clap the play:
Civil, egad! our hospitable land
Bears all the charge, for them to understand:
Meantime we languish, and neglected lie,
Like wives, while you keep better company;
And wish for your own sakes, without a satire,
You'd less good breeding, or had more good-nature.

PROLOGUE TO DON SEBASTIAN.

SPOKEN BY A WOMAN.

The judge remov'd, though he's no more my lord,
May plead at bar, or at the council board:
So may cast poets write; there's no pretension
To argue loss of wit, from loss of pension.

Your looks are cheerful; and in all this place
I see not one that wears a damning face.
The British nation is too brave, to show
Ignoble vengeance on a vanquish'd foe.
At last be civil to the wretch imploring;
And lay your paws upon him without roaring.
Suppose our poet was your foe before,
Yet now, the business of the field is o'er;
'Tis time to let your civil wars alone,
When troops are into winter quarters gone.
Jove was alike to Latian and to Phrygian;
And you well know, a play's of no religion.
Take good advice, and please yourselves this day;
No matter from what hands you have the play.
Among good fellows every health will pass,
That serves to carry round another glass:
When with full bowls of Burgundy you dine,
Though at the mighty monarch you repine,
You grant him still Most Christian in his wine.
Thus far the poet; but his brains grow addle,
And all the rest is purely from this noddle.
You have seen young ladies at the senate door
Prefer petitions, and your grace implore;
However grave the legislators were,
Their cause went ne'er the worse for being fair.
Reasons as weak as theirs, perhaps, I bring;
But I could bribe you with as good a thing.
I heard him make advances of good nature;
That he, for once, would sheath his cutting satire.
Sign but his peace, he vows he'll ne'er again

The sacred names of fops and beaus profane.
Strike up the bargain quickly; for I swear,
As times go now, he offers very fair.
Be not too hard on him with statutes neither;
Be kind; and do not set your teeth together,
To stretch the laws, as cobblers do their leather.
Horses by Papists are not to be ridden,
But sure the Muses' horse was ne'er forbidden;
For in no rate book it was ever found
That Pegasus was valued at five pound;
Fine him to daily drudging and inditing:
And let him pay his taxes out in writing.

PROLOGUE TO THE PROPHETESS.*

BY BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER. REVIVED BY MR. DRYDEN. SPOKEN BY MR. BETTERTON.

What Nostradame, with all his art, can guess
The fate of our approaching Prophetess?
A play, which, like a perspective set right,
Presents our vast expenses close to sight;
But turn the tube, and there we sadly view
Our distant gains; and those uncertain too:

* The Prophetess, or the History of Dioclesian, was revived in 1690, with alterations and additions, after the manner of an opera, by Mr. Betterton, and not by Dryden, as Langbaine, who is generally pretty exact, asserts. Our author only wrote the prologue, and that was forbid by the Earl of Dorset, then Lord Chamberlain, after the first day of its being

A sweeping tax, which on ourselves we raise,
And all, like you, in hopes of better days.
When will our losses warn us to be wise?
Our wealth decreases, and our charges rise.
Money, the sweet allurer of our hopes,
Ebbs out in oceans, and comes in by drops.
We raise new objects to provoke delight;
But you grow sated ere the second sight.
False men, e'en so you serve your mistresses:
They rise three stories in their towering dress;
And, after all, you love not long enough
To pay the rigging, ere you leave them off.
Never content with what you had before,
But true to change, and Englishmen all o'er.
Now honour calls you hence; and all your care
Is to provide the horrid pomp of war.
In plume and scarf, jack-boots, and Bilbo blade,
Your silver goes, that should support our trade.
Go, unkind heroes, leave our stage to mourn;
Till rich from vanquish'd rebels you return;

spoken. King William was at this time prosecuting the war in Ireland, which is alluded to in these lines:

> 'Till rich from vanquish'd rebels you return;
> And the fat spoils of Teague in triumph draw,
> His firkin butter, and his usquebaugh.'

'This prologue,' says Colley Cibber in his Apology, 'had some familiar metaphorical sneers at the Revolution itself; and as the poetry of it was good, the offence of it was less pardonable.

> 'Go conquerors of your male and female foes,
> Men without hearts, and women without hose.' *D.*

And the fat spoils of Teague in triumph draw,
His firkin butter, and his usquebaugh.
Go, conquerors of your male and female foes;
Men without hearts, and women without hose.
Each bring his love a Bogland captive home;
Such proper pages will long trains become;
With copper collars, and with brawny backs,
Quite to put down the fashion of our blacks.
Then shall the pious Muses pay their vows,
And furnish all their laurels for your brows;
Their tuneful voice shall raise for your delights;
We want not poets fit to sing your flights.
But you, bright beauties, for whose only sake
Those doughty knights such dangers undertake,
When they with happy gales are gone away,
With your propitious presence grace our play;
And with a sigh their empty seats survey:
Then think, on that bare bench my servant sat;
I see him ogle still, and hear him chat;
Selling facetious bargains, and propounding
That witty recreation, call'd dumfounding.
Their loss with patience we will try to bear;
And would do more, to see you often here:
That our dead stage, reviv'd by your fair eyes,
Under a female regency may rise.

PROLOGUE TO THE MISTAKES.*

ENTER MR. BRIGHT.

GENTLEMEN, we must beg your pardon; here's no Prologue to be had to-day; our new play is like to come on, without a frontispiece; as bald as one of you young beaux, without your periwig. I left our young poet, snivelling and sobbing behind the scenes, and cursing somebody that has deceived him.

ENTER MR. BOWEN.

Hold your prating to the audience: here's honest Mr. Williams, just come in, half mellow, from the Rose Tavern. He swears he is inspired with claret, and will come on, and that extempore too, either with a prologue of his own or something like one: O here he comes to his trial, at all adventures; for my part I wish him a good deliverance.

[*Exeunt Mr. Bright and Mr. Bowen.*

ENTER MR. WILLIAMS.

Save ye, sirs, save ye! I am in a hopeful way, I should speak something, in rhyme, now, for the play:

* The Mistakes, or False Reports, was not written, but, according to G. Jacob, spoiled by Joseph Harris, a comedian, who dedicated it to Mr., afterwards Sir Godfrey Kneller. It was acted in 1690. *D.*

But the deuce take me, if I know what to say.
I'll stick to my friend the author, that I can tell ye,
To the last drop of claret in my belly.
So far I'm sure 'tis rhyme—that needs no granting:
And, if my verses' feet stumble—you see my own
are wanting.
Our young poet has brought a piece of work,
In which, though much of art there does not lurk,
It may hold out three days—and that's as long as
Cork.
But, for this play—(which till I have done, we show
not)
What may be its fortune—by the Lord—I know
This I dare swear, no malice here is writ: [not.
'Tis innocent of all things; e'en of wit.
He's no high-flyer; he makes no skyrockets,
His squibs are only levell'd at your pockets.
And if his crackers light among your pelf,
You are blown up; if not, then he's blown up
himself. [ter'd madness:
By this time, I'm something recover'd of my flus-
And now a word or two in sober sadness.
Ours is a common play; and you pay down
A common harlot's price; just half a crown.
You'll say, I play the pimp on my friend's score;
But since 'tis for a friend, your gibes give o'er:
For many a mother has done that before.
How's this, you cry? an actor write? we know it;
But Shakespeare was an actor and a poet.
Has not great Jonson's learning often fail'd?

But Shakespeare's greater genius still prevail'd.
Have not some writing actors, in this age,
Deserv'd and found success upon the stage?
To tell the truth, when our old wits are tir'd,
Not one of us but means to be inspir'd.
Let your kind presence grace our homely cheer;
Peace and the butt is all our business here:
So much for that; and the devil take small beer.

PROLOGUE TO KING ARTHUR,

SPOKEN BY MR. BETTERTON.

Sure there's a dearth of wit in this dull town,
When silly plays so savourily go down;
As, when clipt money passes, 'tis a sign
A nation is not over-stock'd with coin.
Happy is he who, in his own defence,
Can write just level to your humble sense;
Who higher than your pitch can never go;
And, doubtless, he must creep, who writes below.
So have I seen, in hall of knight, or lord,
A weak arm throw on a long shovel-board;
He barely lays his piece, bar rubs and knocks,
Secur'd by weakness not to reach the box.
A feeble poet will his business do,
Who, straining all he can, comes up to you:
For, if you like yourselves, you like him too.

An ape his own dear image will embrace;
An ugly beau adores a hatchet face:
So, some of you, on pure instinct of nature,
Are led, by kind, to admire your fellow creature.
In fear of which, our house has sent this day,
To insure our new-built vessel, call'd a play;
No sooner nam'd, than one cries out, These stagers
Come in good time, to make more work for wagers.
The town divides, if it will take or no;
The courtiers bet, the cits, the merchants too;
A sign they have but little else to do.
Bets, at the first, were fool-traps; where the wise,
Like spiders, lay in ambush for the flies:
But now they're grown a common trade for all,
And actions by the new-book rise and fall;
Wits, cheats, and fops, are free of wager-hall.
One policy as far as Lyons carries;
Another, nearer home, sets up for Paris.
Our bets, at last, would e'en to Rome extend,
But that the pope has prov'd our trusty friend.
Indeed, it were a bargain worth our money,
Could we insure another Ottoboni.
Among the rest there are a sharping set,
That pray for us, and yet against us bet.
Sure heaven itself is at a loss to know
If these would have their prayers be heard, or no:
For, in great stakes, we piously suppose,
Men pray but very faintly they may lose.
Leave off these wagers; for, in conscience speaking,
The city needs not your new tricks for breaking:

And if you gallants lose, to all appearing,
You'll want an equipage for volunteering;
While thus, no spark of honour left within ye,
When you should draw the sword, you draw the
guinea.

EPILOGUE TO HENRY II.

BY MR. MOUNTFORT, 1693. SPOKEN BY MRS. BRACEGIRDLE.

Thus you the sad catastrophe have seen,
Occasion'd by a mistress and a queen.
Queen Eleanor the proud was French, they say;
But English manufacture got the day.
Jane Clifford was her name, as books aver:
Fair Rosamond was but her Nom de guerre.
Now tell me, gallants, would you lead your life
With such a mistress, or with such a wife?
If one must be your choice, which d'ye approve,
The curtain lecture, or the curtain love?
Would ye be godly with perpetual strife,
Still drudging on with homely Joan your wife;
Or take your pleasure in a wicked way,
Like honest whoring Harry in the play?
I guess your minds: the mistress would be taken,

15 ——————*the mistress would be taken,*
And nauseous matrimony sent a packing]

The incident of Lady Easy's throwing her handkerchief over Sir Charles's head, whilst he was sleeping, seems to have been taken from the Memoirs of Bassompiere, concern-

And nauseous matrimony sent a packing.
The devil's in you all; mankind's a rogue;
You love the bride, but you detest the clog.
After a year, poor spouse is left i' th' lurch,
And you, like Haynes, return to mother-church.
Or, if the name of Church comes cross your mind,
Chapels of ease behind our scenes you find.
The playhouse is a kind of market place;
One chaffers for a voice, another for a face:
Nay, some of you, I dare not say how many,
Would buy of me a pen'worth for your penny.
E'en this poor face, which with my fan I hide,
Would make a shift my portion to provide,
With some small perquisites I have beside.
Though for your love, perhaps, I should not care,
I could not hate a man that bids me fair.
What might ensue, 'tis hard for me to tell;
But I was drench'd to-day for loving well,
And fear the poison that would make me swell.

PROLOGUE TO ALBUMAZAR.

To say, this comedy pleased long ago,
Is not enough to make it pass you now.
Yet, gentlemen, your ancestors had wit;
When few men censur'd, and when fewer writ.

ing a Count d'Orgevillier and his mistress, tom. ii. p. 6. 1728. at Amsterdam. *Dr. J. W.*

And Jonson, of those few the best, chose this,
As the best model of his masterpiece.
Subtle was got by our Albumazar,
That Alchymist by this Astrologer;
Here he was fashion'd, and we may suppose
He lik'd the fashion well, who wore the clothes.
But Ben made nobly his what he did mould;
What was another's lead becomes his gold:
Like an unrighteous conqueror he reigns,
Yet rules that well, which he unjustly gains.
But this our age such authors does afford,
As make whole plays, and yet scarce write one word:
Who, in this anarchy of wit, rob all,
And what's their plunder, their possession call:
Who, like bold padders, scorn by night to prey,
But rob by sunshine, in the face of day:
Nay scarce the common ceremony use
Of, Stand, Sir, and deliver up your Muse;
But knock the Poet down, and, with a grace,
Mount Pegasus before the author's face.
Faith, if you have such country Toms abroad,
'Tis time for all true men to leave that road.
Yet it were modest, could it but be said,
They strip the living, but these rob the dead;
Dare with the mummies of the Muses play,
And make love to them the Egyptian way;
Or, as a rhyming author would have said,
Join the dead living to the living dead.
Such men in Poetry may claim some part:
They have the license, though they want the art;

And might, where theft was prais'd, for Laureats
Poets, not of the head, but of the hand. [stand,
They make the benefits of others' studying,
Much like the meals of politic Jack-Pudding,
Whose dish to challenge no man has the courage;
'Tis all his own, when once he has spit i' the porridge.
But, gentlemen, you're all concern'd in this;
You are in fault for what they do amiss:
For they their thefts still undiscover'd think,
And durst not steal, unless you please to wink.
Perhaps, you may award by your decree,
They should refund; but that can never be.
For should you letters of reprisal seal,
These men write that which no man else would steal.

AN EPILOGUE.

You saw our wife was chaste, yet thoroughly tried,
And, without doubt, you're hugely edified;
For, like our hero, whom we show'd to-day,
You think no woman true, but in a play.
Love once did make a pretty kind of show:
Esteem and kindness in one breast would grow:
But 'twas Heaven knows how many years ago.
Now some small chat, and guinea expectation,
Gets all the pretty creatures in the nation:
In comedy your little selves you meet;
'Tis Covent Garden drawn in Bridges Street.

Smile on our author then, if he has shown
A jolly nut-brown bastard of your own.
Ah! happy you, with ease and with delight,
Who act those follies Poets toil to write!
The sweating Muse does almost leave the chase:
She puffs, and hardly keeps your Protean vices pace.
Pinch you but in one vice, away you fly
To some new frisk of contrariety.
You roll like snowballs, gathering as you run,
And get seven devils, when dispossess'd of one.
Your Venus once was a Platonic queen;
Nothing of love beside the face was seen;
But every inch of her you now uncase,
And clap a vizard-mask upon the face.
For sins like these, the zealous of the land,
With little hair, and little or no band,
Declare how circulating pestilences
Watch, every twenty years, to snap offences.
Saturn, e'en now, takes doctoral degrees;
He'll do your work this summer without fees.
Let all the boxes, Phœbus, find thy grace,
And, ah, preserve the eighteen penny place!
But for the pit confounders, let 'em go,
And find as little mercy as they show:
The Actors thus, and thus thy Poets pray:
For every critic sav'd, thou damn'st a play.

EPILOGUE TO THE HUSBAND HIS OWN CUCKOLD.*

Like some raw sophister that mounts the pulpit,
So trembles a young Poet at a full pit.
Unus'd to crowds, the Parson quakes for fear,
And wonders how the devil he durst come there;
Wanting three talents needful for the place,
Some beard, some learning, and some little grace:
Nor is the puny Poet void of care;
For authors, such as our new authors are,
Have not much learning, nor much wit to spare:
And as for grace, to tell the truth, there's scarce
But has as little as the very Parson: [one
Both say, they preach and write for your instruction:
But 'tis for a third day, and for induction.
The difference is, that though you like the play,
The poet's gain is ne'er beyond his day.

* This comedy was written by John Dryden, jun., our author's second son. It was acted at the theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields, in 1696. *D.*

15 *The poet's gain is ne'er beyond his day*] Dryden did not receive for his plays from the bookseller above 25*l.* The third night brought about 70*l.* The Dedication five or ten guineas perhaps. Tonson paid Sir Richard Steele for Addison's Drummer, 50*l.* 1715. And Dr. Young received 50*l.* for his Revenge, 1721. Southerne, for his Spartan Dame, in 1722, had 120*l.* and now it is 100*l.* and 150*l.* There were plays on Sundays till the third year of Charles the First's reign. Otway had but one benefit for a play. Sou-

But with the Parson 'tis another case,
He, without holiness, may rise to grace;
The Poet has one disadvantage more,
That if his play be dull, he's damn'd all o'er,
Not only a damn'd blockhead, but damn'd poor.
But dulness well becomes the sable garment;
I warrant that ne'er spoil'd a Priest's preferment:
Wit's not his business, and as wit now goes,
Sirs, 'tis not so much yours as you suppose,
For you like nothing now but nauseous beaux.
You laugh not, gallants, as by proof appears,
At what his beauship says, but what he wears;
So 'tis your eyes are tickled, not your ears:
The tailor and the furrier find the stuff,
The wit lies in the dress, and monstrous muff.
The truth on't is, the payment of the pit
Is like for like, clipt money for clipt wit.
You cannot from our absent author hope,
He should equip the stage with such a fop:
Fools change in England, and new fools arise,
For though the immortal species never dies,
Yet every year new maggots make new flies.
But where he lives abroad, he scarce can find
One fool, for million that he left behind.

therne was the first who had two benefits from a new representation. Farquhar had three for Constant Couple, in 1700. Three of Ben Jonson's plays, Sejanus, Catiline, and the New Inne, and two of Beaumont and Fletcher's, viz. The Faithful Shepherdess, and the Knight of the Burning Pestle, were damned the first night. Even the Silent Woman had like to have been condemned. *Dr. J. W.*

PROLOGUE TO THE PILGRIM.*

REVIVED FOR OUR AUTHOR'S BENEFIT, ANNO 1700.

How wretched is the fate of those who write!
Brought muzzled to the stage, for fear they bite.
Where, like Tom Dove, they stand the common foe;
Lugg'd by the critic, baited by the beau.
Yet worse, their brother Poets damn the Play,
And roar the loudest, though they never pay.
The fops are proud of scandal, for they cry,
At every lewd, low character—That's I.
He, who writes letters to himself, would swear
The world forgot him, if he was not there.
What should a Poet do? 'Tis hard for one
To pleasure all the fools that would be shown:
And yet not two in ten will pass the town.
Most coxcombs are not of the laughing kind;
More goes to make a fop than fops can find.
Quack Maurus, though he never took degrees
In either of our universities;
Yet to be shown by some kind wit he looks,
Because he play'd the fool, and writ three books.

* This play, with alterations by Sir John Vanbrugh, and a secular masque, together with this prologue and an epilogue written by our author, was revived for his benefit in 1700, his fortune being at that time in as declining a state as his health; they were both spoken by Mr. Cibber, then a very young actor, much to Dryden's satisfaction. *D.*

But, if he would be worth a Poet's pen,
He must be more a fool, and write again:
For all the former fustian stuff he wrote
Was dead-born doggerel, or is quite forgot;
His man of Uz, stript of his Hebrew robe,
Is just the proverb, and As poor as Job.
One would have thought he could no longer jog;
But Arthur was a level, Job's a bog.
There, though he crept, yet still he kept in sight;
But here, he founders in, and sinks down right.
Had he prepar'd us, and been dull by rule,
Tobit had first been turn'd to ridicule:
But our bold Briton, without fear or awe,
O'erleaps at once the whole Apocrypha;
Invades the Psalms with rhymes, and leaves no room
For any Vandal Hopkins yet to come.
  But when, if after all, this godly geer
Is not so senseless as it would appear;
Our mountebank has laid a deeper train,
His cant, like Merry Andrew's noble vein,
Catcalls the sects to draw 'em in again.
At leisure hours, in epic song he deals,
Writes to the rumbling of his coach's wheels,
Prescribes in haste, and seldom kills by rule,
But rides triumphant between stool and stool.
  Well, let him go; 'tis yet too early day,
To get himself a place in farce or play.
We know not by what name we should arraign him,
For no one category can contain him;
A pedant, canting preacher, and a quack,

Are load enough to break one ass's back:
At last grown wanton, he presum'd to write,
Traduc'd two kings, their kindness to requite;
One made the doctor, and one dubb'd the knight.

EPILOGUE TO THE PILGRIM.*

Perhaps the parson stretch'd a point too far,
When with our theatres he waged a war.
He tells you, that this very moral age
Receiv'd the first infection from the stage.
But sure, a banish'd court, with lewdness fraught,
The seeds of open vice, returning, brought.
Thus lodg'd (as vice by great example thrives)
It first debauch'd the daughters and the wives.
London, a fruitful soil, yet never bore
So plentiful a crop of horns before.
The Poets, who must live by courts, or starve,
Were proud so good a government to serve;
And, mixing with buffoons and pimps profane,
Tainted the Stage, for some small snip of gain.
For they, like harlots, under bawds profest,
Took all the ungodly pains, and got the least.
Thus did the thriving malady prevail,

* Dryden in this epilogue labours to throw the fault of the licentiousness of dramatic writers, which had been so severely censured by the Rev. Jeremy Collier, upon the example of a court returned from banishment, accompanied by all the vices and follies of foreign climates; and whom to please was the poet's business, as he wrote to eat. *D.*

The court, its head, the Poets but the tail.
The sin was of our native growth, 'tis true;
The scandal of the sin was wholly new.
Misses they were, but modestly conceal'd;
Whitehall the naked Venus first reveal'd.
Who standing as at Cyprus, in her shrine,
The strumpet was ador'd with rites divine.
Ere this, if saints had any secret motion,
'Twas chamber practice all, and close devotion.
I pass the peccadillos of their time;
Nothing but open lewdness was a crime.
A monarch's blood was venial to the nation,
Compar'd with one foul act of fornication.
Now, they would silence us, and shut the door,
That let in all the barefac'd vice before.
As for reforming us, which some pretend,
That work in England is without an end:
Well may we change, but we shall never mend.
Yet, if you can but bear the present Stage,
We hope much better of the coming age.
What would you say, if we should first begin
To stop the trade of love behind the scene:
Where actresses make bold with married men?
For while abroad so prodigal the dolt is,
Poor spouse at home as ragged as a colt is.
In short, we'll grow as moral as we can,
Save here and there a woman or a man:
But neither you, nor we, with all our pains,
Can make clean work; there will be some remains.
While you have still your Oates, and we our Hains.

TRANSLATIONS FROM THEOCRITUS, LUCRETIUS, AND HORACE.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND MISCELLANY

For this last half year I have been troubled with the disease (as I may call it) of translation. The cold prose fits of it, which are always the most tedious with me, were spent in the History of the League; the hot, which succeeded them, in this volume of Verse Miscellanies. The truth is, I fancied to myself, a kind of ease in the change of the paroxysm; never suspecting but the humour would have wasted itself in two or three pastorals of Theocritus, and as many odes of Horace. But finding, or at least thinking I found, something that was more pleasing in them than my ordinary productions, I encouraged myself to renew my old acquaintance with Lucretius and Virgil; and immediately fixed upon some parts of them, which had most affected me in the reading. These were my natural impulses for the undertaking; but there was an accidental motive which was full as forcible, and God forgive him who was the occasion of it. It was my Lord Roscommon's Essay on Translated Verse; which made me uneasy till I tried whether or no I was capable of following his rules, and of reducing the speculation into practice. For many a fair precept in Poetry is like a seeming demonstration in the Mathematics, very specious in the diagram, but failing in the mechanic operation. I think I have generally observed his instructions; I am sure my reason is sufficiently convinced both of their truth and usefulness; which, in other words, is to confess no less a vanity, than to pretend that I have at least in some places made examples to his rules. Yet, withal, I must acknowledge, that I have many times exceeded my commission; for I have both added and omitted, and even sometimes very boldly made such expositions of my authors, as no Dutch commentator will for-

give me. Perhaps, in such particular passages, I have thought that I discovered some beauty yet undiscovered by those pedants, which none but a Poet could have found. Where I have taken away some of their expressions, and cut them shorter, it may possibly be on this consideration, that what was beautiful in the Greek or Latin, would not appear so shining in the English; and where I have enlarged them, I desire the false critics would not always think, that those thoughts are wholly mine, but that either they are secretly in the Poet, or may be fairly deduced from him; or at least, if both those considerations should fail, that my own is of a piece with his, and that if he were living, and an Englishman, they are such as he would probably have written.

For, after all, a translator is to make his author appear as charming as possibly he can, provided he maintains his character, and makes him not unlike himself. Translation is a kind of drawing after the life, where every one will acknowledge there is a double sort of likeness, a good one and a bad. 'Tis one thing to draw the outlines true, the features like, the proportions exact, the colouring itself perhaps tolerable; and another thing to make all these graceful, by the posture, the shadowings, and chiefly by the spirit which animates the whole. I cannot, without some indignation, look on an ill copy of an excellent original. Much less can I behold with patience Virgil, Homer, and some others, whose beauties I have been endeavouring all my life to imitate, so abused, as I may say, to their faces, by a botching interpreter. What English readers, unacquainted with Greek or Latin, will believe me, or any other man, when we commend those authors, and confess we derive all that is pardonable in us from their fountains, if they take those to be the same poets, whom our Ogilbys have translated? But I dare assure them, that a good Poet is no more like himself, in a dull translation, than his carcass would be to his living body. There are many, who understand Greek and Latin, and yet are ignorant of their mother tongue. The proprieties and delicacies of the English are known to few: 'tis impossible even for a good wit to understand and practise them, without the help of a liberal education, long reading, and digesting of those few good authors we have amongst us, the knowledge of men and manners, the freedom of habitudes and conversation with the best company of both sexes; and, in short, without wearing off the rust which he contracted, while he was laying in a stock of learning. Thus difficult it is to understand the purity of English, and critically to discern not only good writers

from bad, and a proper style from a corrupt, but also to distinguish that which is pure in a good author, from that which is vicious and corrupt in him. And for want of all these requisites, or the greatest part of them, most of our ingenious young men take up some cried-up English Poet for their model, adore him, and imitate him, as they think, without knowing wherein he is defective, where he is boyish and trifling, wherein either his thoughts are improper to his subjects, or his expressions unworthy of his thoughts, or the turn of both is unharmonious.

Thus it appears necessary, that a man should be a nice critic in his mother-tongue, before he attempts to translate a foreign language. Neither is it sufficient, that he be able to judge of words and style; but he must be a master of them too: he must perfectly understand his author's tongue, and absolutely command his own. So that, to be a thorough translator, he must be a thorough poet. Neither is it enough to give his author's sense in good English, in poetical expressions, and in musical numbers; for, though all these are exceeding difficult to perform, there yet remains a harder task; and 'tis a secret of which few translators have sufficiently thought. I have already hinted a word or two concerning it; that is, the maintaining the character of an author, which distinguishes him from all others, and makes him appear that individual poet, whom you would interpret. For example, not only the thoughts, but the style and versification of Virgil and Ovid, are very different: yet I see, even in our best poets, who have translated some parts of them, that they have confounded their several talents; and, by endeavouring only at the sweetness and harmony of numbers, have made them both so much alike, that if I did not know the originals, I should never be able to judge by the copies, which was Virgil, and which was Ovid. It was objected against a late noble painter,* that he drew many graceful pictures, but few of them were like. And this happened to him, because he always studied himself, more than those who sat to him. In such translators I can easily distinguish the hand which performed the work, but I cannot distinguish their poet from another. Suppose two authors are equally sweet, yet there is as great distinction to be made in sweetness, as in that of sugar, and that of honey. I can make the difference more plain, by giving you (if it be worth knowing) my own method of proceeding, in my translations out of four

* Sir P. Lely.

several poets in this volume—Virgil, Theocritus, Lucretius, and Horace. In each of these, before I undertook them, I considered the genius and distinguishing character of my author. I looked on Virgil as a succinct, grave, and majestic writer; one who weighed not only every thought, but every word and syllable: who was still aiming to crowd his sense into as narrow a compass as possibly he could; for which reason he is so very figurative, that he requires (I may almost say) a grammar apart to construe him. His verse is every where sounding the very thing in your ears, whose sense it bears: yet the numbers are perpetually varied, to increase the delight of the reader; so that the same sounds are never repeated twice together. On the contrary, Ovid and Claudian, though they write in styles differing from each other, yet have each of them but one sort of music in their verses. All the versification and little variety of Claudian is included within the compass of four or five lines, and then he begins again in the same tenour; perpetually closing his sense at the end of a verse, and that verse commonly which they call golden, or two substantives and two adjectives, with a verb betwixt them to keep the peace. Ovid, with all his sweetness, has as little variety of numbers and sound as he: he is always, as it were, upon the hand-gallop, and his verse runs upon carpet-ground. He avoids, like the other, all Synalæphas, or cutting off one vowel when it comes before another, in the following word; so that minding only smoothness, he wants both variety and majesty. But to return to Virgil: though he is smooth where smoothness is required, yet he is so far from affecting it, that he seems rather to disdain it; frequently makes use of Synalæphas, and concludes his sense in the middle of his verse. He is every where above conceits of epigrammatic wit, and gross hyperboles; he maintains majesty in the midst of plainness; he shines, but glares not; and is stately without ambition (which is the vice of Lucan). I drew my definition of poetical wit from my particular consideration of him: for propriety of thoughts and words are only to be found in him; and, where they are proper, they will be delightful. Pleasure follows of necessity, as the effect does the cause; and therefore is not to be put into the definition. This exact propriety of Virgil I particularly regarded, as a great part of his character; but must confess, to my shame, that I have not been able to translate any part of him so well, as to make him appear wholly like himself. For where the original is close, no version can reach it in the same compass. Han-

nibal Caro's, in the Italian, is the nearest, the most poetical, and the most sonorous of any translation of the Æneids: yet, though he takes the advantage of blank verse, he commonly allows two lines for one of Virgil, and does not always hit his sense. Tasso tells us, in his letters, that Sperone Speroni, a great Italian wit, who was his contemporary, observed of Virgil and Tully, that the Latin orator endeavoured to imitate the copiousness of Homer, the Greek poet; and that the Latin poet made it his business to reach the conciseness of Demosthenes, the Greek orator. Virgil therefore, being so very sparing of his words, and leaving so much to be imagined by the reader, can never be translated as he ought, in any modern tongue. To make him copious, is to alter his character; and to translate him line for line is impossible; because the Latin is naturally a more succinct language than either the Italian, Spanish, French, or even than the English, which, by reason of its monosyllables, is far the most compendious of them. Virgil is much the closest of any Roman poet, and the Latin hexameter has more feet than the English heroic.

Besides all this, an author has the choice of his own thoughts and words, which a translator has not; he is confined by the sense of the inventor to those expressions which are the nearest to it: so that Virgil, studying brevity, and having the command of his own language, could bring those words into a narrow compass, which a translator cannot render without circumlocutions. In short, they, who have called him the torture of grammarians, might also have called him the plague of translators; for he seems to have studied not to be translated. I own that, endeavouring to turn his Nisus and Euryalus as close as I was able, I have performed that Episode too literally; that, giving more scope to Mezentius and Lausus, that version, which has more of the majesty of Virgil, has less of his conciseness; and all that I can promise for myself is only that I have done both better than Ogilby, and perhaps as well as Caro. So that, methinks, I come like a malefactor, to make a speech upon the gallows, and to warn all other poets, by my sad example, from the sacrilege of translating Virgil. Yet, by considering him so carefully as I did before my attempt, I have made some faint resemblance of him; and, had I taken more time, might possibly have succeeded better; but never so well, as to have satisfied myself.

He who excels all other poets in his own language, were it possible to do him right, must appear above them in our

tongue; which, as my Lord Roscommon justly observes, approaches nearest to the Roman in its majesty: nearest indeed, but with a vast interval betwixt them. There is an inimitable grace in Virgil's words, and in them principally consists that beauty which gives so inexpressible a pleasure to him who best understands their force. This diction of his, I must once again say, is never to be copied; and, since it cannot, he will appear but lame in the best translation. The turns of his verse, his breakings, his propriety, his numbers, and his gravity, I have as far imitated as the poverty of our language and the hastiness of my performance would allow. I may seem sometimes to have varied from his sense; but I think the greatest variations may be fairly deduced from him; and where I leave his commentators, it may be I understand him better: at least I writ without consulting them in many places. But two particular lines in Mezentius and Lausus I cannot so easily excuse. They are indeed remotely allied to Virgil's sense; but they are too like the tenderness of Ovid, and were printed before I had considered them enough to alter them. The first of them I have forgotten, and cannot easily retrieve, because the copy is at the press; the second is this:

> When Lausus died, I was already slain.

This appears pretty enough at first sight; but I am convinced for many reasons, that the expression is too bold; that Virgil would not have said it, though Ovid would. The reader may pardon it, if he please, for the freeness of the confession; and instead of that, and the former, admit these two lines, which are more according to the author:

> Nor ask I life, nor fought with that design;
> As I had us'd my fortune, use thou thine.

Having with much ado got clear of Virgil, I have, in the next place, to consider the genius of Lucretius, whom I have translated more happily in those parts of him which I undertook. If he was not of the best age of Roman poetry, he was at least of that which preceded it; and he himself refined it to that degree of perfection, both in the language and the thoughts, that he left an easy task to Virgil; who as he succeeded him in time, so he copied his excellencies: for the method of the Georgics is plainly derived from him. Lucretius had chosen a subject naturally crabbed; he therefore adorned it with poetical descriptions, and precepts of

morality, in the beginning and ending of his books, which you see Virgil has imitated with great success, in those four books, which in my opinion, are more perfect in their kind than even his divine Æneids. The turn of his verse he has likewise followed, in those places which Lucretius has most laboured, and some of his very lines he has transplanted into his own works, without much variation. If I am not mistaken, the distinguishing character of Lucretius (I mean of his soul and genius) is a certain kind of noble pride, and positive assertion of his opinions. He is every where confident of his own reason, and assuming an absolute command, not only over his vulgar reader, but even his patron Memmius. For he is always bidding him attend, as if he had the rod over him, and using a magisterial authority, while he instructs him. From his time to ours, I know none so like him as our poet and philosopher of Malmsbury. This is that perpetual dictatorship, which is exercised by Lucretius; who, though often in the wrong, yet seems to deal *bonâ fide* with his reader, and tells him nothing but what he thinks: in which plain sincerity, I believe, he differs from our Hobbes, who could not but be convinced, or at least doubt of some eternal truths, which he has opposed. But for Lucretius, he seems to disdain all manner of replies, and is so confident of his cause, that he is beforehand with his antagonists; urging for them whatever he imagined they could say, and leaving them, as he supposes, without an objection for the future; all this too, with so much scorn and indignation, as if he were assured of the triumph, before he entered into the lists. From this sublime and daring genius of his, it must of necessity come to pass, that his thoughts must be masculine, full of argumentation, and that sufficiently warm. From the same fiery temper proceeds the loftiness of his expressions, and the perpetual torrent of his verse, where the barrenness of his subject does not too much constrain the quickness of his fancy. For there is no doubt to be made, but that he could have been every where as poetical, as he is in his descriptions, and in the moral part of his Philosophy, if he had not aimed more to instruct, in his System of Nature, than to delight. But he was bent upon making Memmius a materialist, and teaching him to defy an invisible power. In short, he was so much an atheist, that he forgot sometimes to be a poet. These are the considerations which I had of that author, before I attempted to translate some parts of him. And accordingly I laid by my natural diffidence and scepticism for a while, to take up that dogmatical way of

his, which, as I said, is so much his character, as to make him that individual Poet. As for his opinions concerning the mortality of the soul, they are so absurd, that I cannot, if I would, believe them. I think a future state demonstrable even by natural arguments; at least, to take away rewards and punishments, is only a pleasing prospect to a man, who resolves beforehand not to live morally. But on the other side, the thought of being nothing after death is a burthen insupportable to a virtuous man, even though a heathen. We naturally aim at happiness, and cannot bear to have it confined to the shortness of our present being, especially when we consider, that virtue is generally unhappy in this world, and vice fortunate: so that 'tis hope of futurity alone that makes this life tolerable, in expectation of a better. Who would not commit all the excesses, to which he is prompted by his natural inclinations, if he may do them with security while he is alive, and be uncapable of punishment after he is dead? If he be cunning and secret enough to avoid the laws, there is no band of morality to restrain him: for fame and reputation are weak ties: many men have not the least sense of them: powerful men are only awed by them, as they conduce to their interest, and that not always, when a passion is predominant: and no man will be contained within the bounds of duty, when he may safely transgress them. These are my thoughts abstractedly, and without entering into the notions of our Christian faith, which is the proper business of divines.

But there are other arguments in this poem (which I have turned into English) not belonging to the mortality of the soul, which are strong enough to a reasonable man, to make him less in love with life, and consequently in less apprehensions of death. Such as are the natural satiety proceeding from a perpetual enjoyment of the same things; the inconveniences of old age, which make him incapable of corporeal pleasures; the decay of understanding and memory, which render him contemptible, and useless to others. These, and many other reasons, so pathetically urged, so beautifully expressed, so adorned with examples, and so admirably raised by the Prosopopeia of Nature, who is brought in speaking to her children, with so much authority and vigour, deserve the pains I have taken with them, which I hope have not been unsuccessful, or unworthy of my author; at least I must take the liberty to own, that I was pleased with my own endeavours, which but rarely happens to me; and that I am not dissatisfied upon the review of any thing I have done in this author.

It is true, there is something, and that of some moment, to be objected against my Englishing the Nature of Love,* from the fourth book of Lucretius; and I can less easily answer why I translated it, than why I thus translated it. The objection arises from the obscenity of the subject; which is aggravated by the too lively and alluring delicacy of the verses. In the first place, without the least formality of an excuse, I own it pleased me: and let my enemies make the worst they can of this confession: I am not yet so secure from that passion, but that I want my author's antidotes against it. He has given the truest and most philosophical account both of the disease and remedy, which I ever found in any author: for which reasons I translated him. But it will be asked why I turned him into this luscious English? for I will not give it a worse word. Instead of an answer, I would ask again of my supercilious adversaries, whether I am not bound, when I translate an author, to do him all the right I can, and to translate him to the best advantage? If, to mince his meaning, which I am satisfied was honest and instructive, I had either omitted some part of what he said, or taken from the strength of his expression, I certainly had wronged him; and that freeness of thought and words being thus cashiered in my hands, he had no longer been Lucretius. If nothing of this kind be to be read, physicians must not study nature, anatomies must not be seen, and somewhat I could say of particular passages in books, which, to avoid profaneness, I do not name. But the intention qualifies the act; and both mine and my author's were to instruct as well as please. It is most certain that barefaced bawdry is the poorest pretence to wit imaginable. If I should say otherwise, I should have two great authorities against me. The one is the Essay on Poetry, which I publicly valued before I knew the author of it, and with the commendation of which my Lord Roscommon so happily begins his Essay on Translated Verse: the other is no less than our admired Cowley, who says the same thing in other words: for in his Ode concerning Wit, he writes thus of it:

> Much less can that have any place,
> At which a virgin hides her face:
> Such dross the fire must purge away; 'tis just
> The author blush, there, where the reader must.

Here indeed Mr. Cowley goes farther than the Essay; for he asserts plainly, that obscenity has no place in wit: the

* Omitted in the present edition.

other only says, 'tis a poor pretence to it, or an ill sort of wit which has nothing more to support it than barefaced ribaldry; which is both unmannerly in itself, and fulsome to the reader. But neither of these will reach my case: for in the first place, I am only the translator, not the inventor; so that the heaviest part of the censure falls upon Lucretius, before it reaches me; in the next place, neither he nor I have used the grossest words, but the cleanest metaphors we could find, to palliate the broadness of the meaning; and, to conclude, have carried the poetical part no farther, than the philosophical exacted.

There are a sort of blundering half-witted people, who make a great deal of noise about a verbal slip; though Horace would instruct them better in true criticism:

> ——— non ego paucis
> Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,
> Aut humana parum cavit natura.

True judgment in poetry, like that in painting, takes a view of the whole together, whether it be good or not; and where the beauties are more than the faults, concludes for the poet against the little judge. It is a sign that malice is hard driven, when it is forced to lay hold on a word or syllable: to arraign a man is one thing, and to cavil at him is another. In the midst of an ill-natured generation of scribblers, there is always justice enough left in mankind to protect good writers: and they too are obliged, both by humanity and interest, to espouse each other's cause against false critics, who are the common enemies.

This last consideration puts me in mind of what I owe to the ingenious and learned translator of Lucretius. I have not here designed to rob him of any part of that commendation which he has so justly acquired by the whole author, whose fragments only fall to my portion. What I have now performed, is no more than I intended above twenty years ago. The ways of our translation are very different; he follows him more closely than I have done, which became an interpreter of the whole Poem: I take more liberty, because it best suited with my design, which was to make him as pleasing as I could. He had been too voluminous, had he used my method in so long a work; and I had certainly taken his, had I made it my business to translate the whole. The preference then is justly his: and I join with Mr. Evelyn in the confession of it, with this additional advantage to him, that his reputation is already established in this Poet, mine

is to make its fortune in the world. If I have been any where obscure, in following our common author, or if Lucretius himself is to be condemned, I refer myself to his excellent annotations, which I have often read, and always with some new pleasure.

My preface begins already to swell upon me, and looks as if I were afraid of my reader, by so tedious a bespeaking of him: and yet I have Horace and Theocritus upon my hands; but the Greek gentleman shall quickly be dispatched, because I have more business with the Roman.

That which distinguishes Theocritus from all other Poets, both Greek and Latin, and which raises him even above Virgil in his Eclogues, is the inimitable tenderness of his passions, and the natural expression of them in words so becoming of a pastoral. A simplicity shines through all he writes: he shows his art and learning by disguising both. His shepherds never rise above their country education in their complaints of love. There is the same difference betwixt him and Virgil, as there is betwixt Tasso's Aminta and the Pastor Fido of Guarini. Virgil's shepherds are too well read in the Philosophy of Epicurus and of Plato; and Guarini's seem to have been bred in courts: but Theocritus and Tasso have taken theirs from cottages and plains. It was said of Tasso, in relation to his similitudes, mai esce del bosco; that he never departed from the woods, that is, all his comparisons were taken from the country. The same may be said of our Theocritus. He is softer than Ovid; he touches the passions more delicately, and performs all this out of his own fund, without diving into the arts and sciences for a supply. Even his Doric dialect has an incomparable sweetness in its clownishness, like a fair shepherdess in her country russet, talking in a Yorkshire tone. This was impossible for Virgil to imitate; because the severity of the Roman Language denied him that advantage. Spenser has endeavoured it in his Shepherd's Kalendar; but neither will it succeed in English; for which reason I forebore to attempt it. For Theocritus writ to Sicilians, who spoke that dialect; and I direct this part of my translations to our ladies, who neither understand nor will take pleasure in such homely expressions.

I proceed to Horace. Take him in parts, and he is chiefly to be considered in his three different talents, as he was a Critic, a Satirist, and a Writer of Odes. His morals are uniform, and run through all of them: for let his Dutch commentators say what they will, his philosophy was Epicurean; and he made use of gods and providence only to serve

a turn in Poetry. But since neither his Criticisms, which are the most instructive of any that are written in this art, nor his Satires, which are incomparably beyond Juvenal's, (if to laugh and rally is to be preferred to railing and declaiming), are no part of my present undertaking, I confine myself wholly to his Odes. These are also of several sorts: some of them are panegyrical, others moral, the rest jovial, or (if I may so call them) Bacchanalian. As difficult as he makes it, and as indeed it is, to imitate Pindar, yet, in his most elevated flights, and in the sudden changes of his subject with almost imperceptible connexions, that Theban Poet is his master. But Horace is of the more bounded stanza, and confines himself strictly to one sort of verse, or fancy, in every Ode. That which will distinguish his style from all other poets, is the elegance of his words, and the numerousness of his verse. There is nothing so delicately turned in all the Roman language. There appears in every part of his diction, or, to speak English, in all his expressions, a kind of noble and bold purity. His words are chosen with as much exactness as Virgil's; but there seems to be a greater spirit in them. There is a secret happiness attends his choice, which in Petronius is called Curiosa Felicitas, and which I suppose he had from the feliciter audere of Horace himself. But the most distinguishing part of all his character seems to me to be his briskness, his jollity, and his good humour; and those I have chiefly endeavoured to copy. His other excellencies, I confess, are above my imitation. One Ode, which infinitely pleased me in the reading, I have attempted to translate in Pindaric Verse: it is that which is inscribed to the present Earl of Rochester, to whom I have particular obligations, which this small testimony of my gratitude can never pay. It is his darling in the Latin, and I have taken some pains to make it my masterpiece in English: for which reason I took this kind of verse, which allows more latitude than any other. Every one knows it was introduced into our language, in this age, by the happy genius of Mr. Cowley. The seeming easiness of it has made it spread: but it has not been considered enough, to be so well cultivated. It languishes in almost every hand but his, and some very few, whom, to keep the rest in countenance, I do not name. He, indeed, has brought it as near perfection as was possible in so short a time. But if I may be allowed to speak my mind modestly, and without injury to his sacred ashes, somewhat of the purity of the English, somewhat of more equal thoughts, somewhat of sweetness in the numbers,

in one word, somewhat of a finer turn, and more Lyrical Verse, is yet wanting. As for the soul of it, which consists in the warmth and vigour of fancy, the masterly figures, and the copiousness of imagination, he has excelled all others in this kind. Yet, if the kind itself be capable of more perfection, though rather in the ornamental parts of it, than the essential, what rules of morality or respect have I broken, in naming the defects, that they may hereafter be amended? Imitation is a nice point, and there are few Poets who deserve to be models in all they write. Milton's Paradise Lost is admirable; but I am therefore bound to maintain, that there are no flats amongst his elevations, when 'tis evident he creeps along sometimes, for above a hundred lines together. Cannot I admire the height of his invention, and the strength of his expression, without defending his antiquated words, and the perpetual harshness of their sound? It is as much commendation as a man can bear, to own him excellent; all beyond it is idolatry.

Since Pindar was the prince of Lyric Poets, let me have leave to say, that, in imitating him, our numbers should, for the most part, be Lyrical. For variety, or rather where the majesty of thought requires it, they may be stretched to the English Heroic of five feet, and to the French Alexandrine of six. But the ear must preside, and direct the judgment to the choice of numbers. Without the nicety of this, the harmony of Pindaric Verse can never be complete: the cadency of one line must be a rule to that of the next; and the sound of the former must slide gently into that which follows; without leaping from one extreme into another. It must be done like the shadowings of a picture, which fall by degrees into a darker colour. I shall be glad, if I have so explained myself as to be understood; but if I have not, quod nequeo dicere, et sentio tantum, must be my excuse.

There remains much more to be said on this subject; but, to avoid envy, I will be silent. What I have said is the general opinion of the best judges, and in a manner has been forced from me, by seeing a noble sort of Poetry so happily restored by one man, and so grossly copied by almost all the rest. A musical ear, and a great genius, if another Mr. Cowley could arise, in another age may bring it to perfection. In the mean time,

> —— Fungar vice cotis, acutum
> Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exsors ipsa secandi.

I hope it will not be expected from me that I should say

any thing of my fellow undertakers in this Miscellany. Some of them are too nearly related to me, to be commended without suspicion of partiality: others, I am sure, need it not; and the rest I have not perused.

To conclude, I am sensible that I have written this too hastily and too loosely: I fear I have been tedious, and, which is worse, it comes out from the first draught, and uncorrected. This I grant is no excuse; for it may be reasonably urged, why he did not write with more leisure, or, if he had it not (which was certainly my case), why did he attempt to write on so nice a subject? The objection is unanswerable; but in part of recompense, let me assure the reader, that, in hasty productions, he is sure to meet with an author's present sense, which cooler thoughts would possibly have disguised. There is undoubtedly more of spirit, though not of judgment, in these uncorrect Essays, and consequently, though my hazard be the greater, yet the reader's pleasure is not the less.

JOHN DRYDEN.

TRANSLATIONS FROM THEOCRITUS.

AMARYLLIS;

OR, THE THIRD IDYLLIUM OF THEOCRITUS, PARAPHRASED.

To Amaryllis love compels my way,
My browzing goats upon the mountains stray:
O Tityrus, tend them well, and see them fed
In pastures fresh, and to their watering led;
And 'ware the ridgling with his budding head.
Ah, beauteous nymph! can you forget your love,
The conscious grottos, and the shady grove;
Where stretch'd at ease your tender limbs were laid,
Your nameless beauties nakedly display'd?
Then I was call'd your darling, your desire,
With kisses such as set my soul on fire:
But you are chang'd, yet I am still the same;
My heart maintains for both a double flame;
Griev'd, but unmov'd, and patient of your scorn:
So faithful I, and you so much forsworn!
I die, and death will finish all my pain;
Yet, ere I die, behold me once again:
Am I so much deform'd, so chang'd of late?
What partial judges are our love and hate!

Ten wildings have I gather'd for my dear;
How ruddy like your lips their streaks appear!
Far off you view'd them with a longing eye
Upon the topmost branch (the tree was high):
Yet nimbly up, from bough to bough I swerv'd,
And for to-morrow have ten more reserv'd.
Look on me kindly, and some pity show,
Or give me leave at least to look on you.
Some god transform me by his heavenly power
E'en to a bee to buzz within your bower,
The winding ivy-chaplet to invade,
And folded fern, that your fair forehead shade.
Now to my cost the force of love I find;
The heavy hand it bears on humankind.
The milk of tigers was his infant food,
Taught from his tender years the taste of blood;
His brother whelps and he ran wild about the wood.
Ah nymph, train'd up in his tyrannic court,
To make the sufferings of your slaves your sport!
Unheeded ruin! treacherous delight!
O polish'd hardness, soften'd to the sight!
Whose radiant eyes your ebon brows adorn,
Like midnight those, and these like break of morn!
Smile once again, revive me with your charms:
And let me die contented in your arms.
I would not ask to live another day,
Might I but sweetly kiss my soul away.
Ah, why am I from empty joys debarr'd?
For kisses are but empty when compar'd.
I rave, and in my raging fit shall tear

The garland which I wove for you to wear,
Of parsley, with a wreath of ivy bound,
And border'd with a rosy edging round.
What pangs I feel, unpitied and unheard!
Since I must die, why is my fate deferr'd!
I strip my body of my shepherd's frock:
Behold that dreadful downfall of a rock,
Where yon old fisher views the waves from high!
'Tis that convenient leap I mean to try.
You would be pleas'd to see me plunge to shore,
But better pleas'd if I should rise no more.
I might have read my fortune long ago,
When, seeking my success in love to know,
I tried the infallible prophetic way,
A poppy-leaf upon my palm to lay:
I struck, and yet no lucky crack did follow;
Yet I struck hard, and yet the leaf lay hollow:
And, which was worse, if any worse could prove,
The withering leaf foreshow'd your withering love.
Yet farther (ah, how far a lover dares!)
My last recourse I had to sieve and sheers;
And told the witch Agreo my disease:
(Agreo, that in harvest us'd to lease:
But harvest done, to char-work did aspire;
Meat, drink, and twopence was her daily hire,)
To work she went, her charms she mutter'd o'er,
And yet the resty sieve wagg'd ne'er the more;
I wept for woe, the testy beldame swore,
And, foaming with her god, foretold my fate;
That I was doom'd to love, and you to hate.

A milk-white goat for you I did provide;
Two milk-white kids run frisking by her side,
For which the nut-brown lass, Erithacis,
Full often offer'd many a savoury kiss.
Hers they shall be, since you refuse the price:
What madman would o'erstand his market twice!
My right eye itches, some good luck is near,
Perhaps my Amaryllis may appear;
I'll set up such a note as she shall hear.
What nymph but my melodious voice would move?
She must be flint, if she refuse my love.
Hippomenes, who ran with noble strife
To win his lady, or to lose his life,
(What shift some men will make to get a wife!)
Threw down a golden apple in her way;
For all her haste she could not choose but stay:
Renown said, Run; the glittering bribe cried, Hold;
The man might have been hang'd, but for his gold.
Yet some suppose 'twas love (some few indeed)
That stopp'd the fatal fury of her speed:
She saw, she sigh'd; her nimble feet refuse
Their wonted speed, and she took pains to lose.
A Prophet some, and some a Poet cry,
(No matter which, so neither of them lie)
From steepy Othrys' top to Pylus drove
His herd; and for his pains enjoy'd his love:
If such another wager should be laid,
I'll find the man, if you can find the maid.
Why name I men, when Love extended finds
His power on high, and in celestial minds?

Venus the shepherd's homely habit took,
And manag'd something else besides the crook;
Nay, when Adonis died, was heard to roar,
And never from her heart forgave the boar.
How blest was fair Endymion with his moon,
Who sleeps on Latmos' top from night to noon!
What Jason from Medea's love possess'd,
You shall not hear, but know 'tis like the rest.
My aching head can scarce support the pain;
This cursed love will surely turn my brain:
Feel how it shoots, and yet you take no pity;
Nay then 'tis time to end my doleful ditty.
A clammy sweat does o'er my temples creep;
My heavy eyes are urg'd with iron sleep:
I lay me down to gasp my latest breath,
The wolves will get a breakfast by my death;
Yet scarce enough their hunger to supply,
For love has made me carrion ere I die.

THE EPITHALAMIUM OF HELEN AND MENELAUS.

FROM THE EIGHTEENTH IDYLLIUM OF THEOCRITUS.

Twelve Spartan virgins, noble, young, and fair,
With violet wreaths adorn'd their flowing hair;
And to the pompous palace did resort,
Where Menelaus kept his royal court.
There hand in hand a comely choir they led;

To sing a blessing to his nuptial bed, [bespread.
With curious needles wrought, and painted flow'rs
Jove's beauteous daughter now his bride must be,
And Jove himself was less a god than he:
For this their artful hands instruct the lute to sound,
Their feet assist their hands, and justly beat the ground.
This was their song: Why, happy bridegroom, why,
Ere yet the stars are kindled in the sky,
Ere twilight shades, or evening dews are shed,
Why dost thou steal so soon away to bed?
Has Somnus brush'd thy eyelids with his rod,
Or do thy legs refuse to bear their load
With flowing bowls of a more generous god?
If gentle slumber on thy temples creep,
(But, naughty man, thou dost not mean to sleep)
Betake thee to thy bed, thou drowzy drone,
Sleep by thyself, and leave thy bride alone:
Go, leave her with her maiden mates to play
At sports more harmless till the break of day:
Give us this evening: thou hast morn and night,
And all the year before thee, for delight.
O happy youth! to thee, among the crowd
Of rival princes, Cupid sneez'd aloud;
And every lucky omen sent before,
To meet thee landing on the Spartan shore.
Of all our heroes thou canst boast alone,
That Jove, whene'er he thunders, calls thee son.
Betwixt two sheets thou shalt enjoy her bare,
With whom no Grecian virgin can compare
So soft, so sweet, so balmy, and so fair.

A boy, like thee, would make a kingly line:
But oh, a girl like her must be divine.
Her equals we, in years, but not in face,
Twelve score viragos of the Spartan race,
While naked to Eurotas' banks we bend,
And there in manly exercise contend,
When she appears, are all eclips'd and lost,
And hide the beauties that we made our boast.
So, when the night and winter disappear,
The purple morning, rising with the year,
Salutes the spring, as her celestial eyes
Adorn the world, and brighten all the skies:
So beauteous Helen shines among the rest,
Tall, slender, straight, with all the Graces blest.
As pines the mountains, or as fields the corn,
Or as Thessalian steeds the race adorn;
So rosy-colour'd Helen is the pride
Of Lacedæmon, and of Greece beside.
Like her no nymph can willing osiers bend
In basket-works, which painted streaks commend:
With Pallas in the loom she may contend.
But none, ah! none can animate the lyre,
And the mute strings with vocal souls inspire:
Whether the learn'd Minerva be her theme,
Or chaste Diana bathing in the stream;
None can record their heavenly praise so well
As Helen, in whose eyes ten thousand Cupids dwell.
O fair, O graceful! yet with maids enroll'd,
But whom to-morrow's sun a matron shall behold!
Yet ere to-morrow's sun shall show his head,
The dewy paths of meadows we will tread,

For crowns and chaplets to adorn thy head.
Where all shall weep, and wish for thy return,
As bleating lambs their absent mother mourn.
Our noblest maids shall to thy name bequeath
The boughs of Lotos, form'd into a wreath.
This monument, thy maiden beauties' due,
High on a plane tree shall be hung to view:
On the smooth rind the passenger shall see
Thy name engrav'd, and worship Helen's tree: 75
Balm, from a silver box distill'd around, [ground.
Shall all bedew the roots, and scent the sacred
The balm, 'tis true, can aged plants prolong,
But Helen's name will keep it ever young.
Hail bride, hail bridegroom, son-in-law to Jove!
With fruitful joys Latona bless your love!
Let Venus furnish you with full desires,
Add vigour to your wills, and fuel to your fires!
Almighty Jove augment your wealthy store,
Give much to you, and to his grandsons more!
From generous loins a generous race will spring,
Each girl, like her, a queen; each boy, like you
a king.
Now sleep, if sleep you can; but while you rest,
Sleep close, with folded arms, and breast to breast:
Rise in the morn; but oh! before you rise, 90
Forget not to perform your morning sacrifice.
We will be with you ere the crowing cock [flock.
Salutes the light, and struts before his feather'd
Hymen, oh, Hymen, to thy triumphs run,
And view the mighty spoils thou hast in battle won.

THE DESPAIRING LOVER,

FROM THE TWENTY-THIRD IDYLLIUM OF THEOCRITUS.

With inauspicious love, a wretched swain
Pursu'd the fairest nymph of all the plain;
Fairest indeed, but prouder far than fair,
She plung'd him hopeless in a deep despair:
Her heavenly form too haughtily she priz'd,
His person hated, and his gifts despis'd;
Nor knew the force of Cupid's cruel darts,
Nor fear'd his awful power on human hearts;
But either from her hopeless lover fled,
Or with disdainful glances shot him dead.
No kiss, no look, to cheer the drooping boy;
No word she spoke, she scorn'd e'en to deny.
But, as a hunted panther casts about [scout,
Her glaring eyes, and pricks her listening ears to
So she, to shun his toils, her cares employ'd,
And fiercely in her savage freedom joy'd.
Her mouth she writh'd, her forehead taught to frown,
Her eyes to sparkle fires to love unknown:
Her sallow cheeks her envious mind did show,
And every feature spoke aloud the curstness of a
Yet could not he his obvious fate escape; [shrew.
His love still dress'd her in a pleasing shape;
And every sullen frown, and bitter scorn,
But fann'd the fuel that too fast did burn.

Long time, unequal to his mighty pain,
He strove to curb it, but he strove in vain:
At last his woes broke out, and begg'd relief
With tears, the dumb petitioners of grief:
With tears so tender, as adorn'd his love,
And any heart, but only hers, would move.
Trembling before her bolted doors he stood,
And there pour'd out the unprofitable flood:
Staring his eyes, and haggard was his look;
Then, kissing first the threshold, thus he spoke.

Ah, nymph, more cruel than of human race!
Thy tigress heart belies thy angel face:
Too well thou show'st thy pedigree from stone:
Thy grandame's was the first by Pyrrha thrown:
Unworthy thou to be so long desir'd;
But so my love, and so my fate requir'd.
I beg not now (for 'tis in vain) to live;
But take this gift, the last that I can give.
This friendly cord shall soon decide the strife
Betwixt my lingering love and loathsome life:
This moment puts an end to all my pain;
I shall no more despair, nor thou disdain.
Farewell, ungrateful and unkind! I go
Condemn'd by thee to those sad shades below.
I go the extremest remedy to prove,
To drink oblivion, and to drench my love:
There happily to lose my long desires:
But ah! what draught so deep to quench my fires?
Farewell, ye never-opening gates, ye stones,
And threshold guilty of my midnight moans!

What I have suffer'd here ye know too well;
What I shall do the gods and I can tell.
The rose is fragrant, but it fades in time:
The violet sweet, but quickly past the prime;
White lilies hang their heads, and soon decay,
And whiter snow in minutes melts away:
Such is your blooming youth, and withering so:
The time will come, it will, when you shall know
The rage of love; your haughty heart shall burn
In flames like mine, and meet a like return.
Obdurate as you are, oh! hear at least
My dying prayers, and grant my last request.
When first you ope your doors, and, passing by,
The sad ill-omen'd object meets your eye,
Think it not lost, a moment if you stay;
The breathless wretch, so made by you, survey:
Some cruel pleasure will from thence arise,
To view the mighty ravage of your eyes.
I wish (but oh! my wish is vain, I fear)
The kind oblation of a falling tear:
Then loose the knot, and take me from the place,
And spread your mantle o'er my grizly face;
Upon my livid lips bestow a kiss:
O envy not the dead, they feel not bliss!
Nor fear your kisses can restore my breath;
E'en you are not more pitiless than death.
Then for my corpse a homely grave provide,
Which love and me from public scorn may hide.
Thrice call upon my name, thrice beat your breast,
And hail me thrice to everlasting rest;

Last let my tomb this sad inscription bear:
A wretch whom love has kill'd lies buried here;
O passengers, Aminta's eyes beware.
Thus having said, and furious with his love,
He heav'd with more than human force to move
A weighty stone (the labour of a team) [beam:
And rais'd from thence he reach'd the neighb'ring
Around its bulk a sliding knot he throws,
And fitted to his neck the fatal noose:
Then spurning backward, took a swing, till death
Crept up, and stopp'd the passage of his breath.
The bounce burst ope the door; the scornful fair
Relentless look'd, and saw him beat his quivering
feet in air;
Nor wept his fate, nor cast a pitying eye,
Nor took him down, but brush'd regardless by:
And, as she pass'd, her chance of fate was such,
Her garments touch'd the dead, polluted by the
touch:
Next to the dance, thence to the bath did move;
The bath was sacred to the god of Love;
Whose injur'd image, with a wrathful eye,
Stood threat'ning from a pedestal on high:
Nodding awhile, and watchful of his blow,
He fell; and falling crush'd the ungrateful nymph
below:
Her gushing blood the pavement all besmear'd;
And this her last expiring voice was heard;
Lovers, farewell, revenge has reach'd my scorn;
Thus warn'd, be wise, and love for love return.

TRANSLATIONS FROM LUCRETIUS.

THE BEGINNING OF THE FIRST BOOK OF LUCRETIUS.

Delight of humankind, and gods above,
Parent of Rome, propitious Queen of Love,
Whose vital power, air, earth, and sea supplies,
And breeds whate'er is born beneath the rolling skies:
For every kind, by thy prolific might,
Springs, and beholds the regions of the light.
Thee, goddess, thee the clouds and tempests fear,
And at thy pleasing presence disappear:
For thee the land in fragrant flowers is dress'd;
For thee the ocean smiles, and smooths her wavy breast; is blest.
And heaven itself with more serene and purer light
For when the rising spring adorns the mead,
And a new scene of nature stands display'd,
When teeming buds, and cheerful greens appear,
And western gales unlock the lazy year:
The joyous birds thy welcome first express,
Whose native songs thy genial fire confess;
Then savage beasts bound o'er their slighted food,
Struck with thy darts, and tempt the raging flood.
All nature is thy gift; earth, air, and sea:

Of all that breathes, the various progeny,
Stung with delight, is goaded on by thee.
O'er barren mountains, o'er the flowery plain,
The leafy forest, and the liquid main,
Extends thy uncontrol'd and boundless reign.
Through all the living regions dost thou move,
And scatter'st, where thou goest, the kindly seeds of love.
Since then the race of every living thing
Obeys thy power; since nothing new can spring
Without thy warmth, without thy influence bear,
Or beautiful, or lovesome can appear;
Be thou my aid, my tuneful song inspire,
And kindle with thy own productive fire;
While all thy province, Nature, I survey,
And sing to Memmius an immortal lay
Of heaven and earth, and every where thy wondrous power display:
To Memmius, under thy sweet influence born,
Whom thou with all thy gifts and graces dost adorn.
The rather then assist my Muse and me,
Infusing verses worthy him and thee.
Meantime on land and sea let barbarous discord cease,
And lull the list'ning world in universal peace.
To thee mankind their soft repose must owe;
For thou alone that blessing canst bestow;
Because the brutal business of the war
Is manag'd by thy dreadful servant's care;
Who oft retires from fighting fields, to prove
The pleasing pains of thy eternal love;
And, panting on thy breast, supinely lies,

While with thy heavenly form he feeds his famish'd
Sucks in with open lips thy balmy breath, [eyes;
By turns restor'd to life, and plung'd in pleasing
death.
There while thy curling limbs about him move,
Involv'd and fetter'd in the links of love,
When, wishing all, he nothing can deny,
Thy charms in that auspicious moment try;
With winning eloquence our peace implore,
And quiet to the weary world restore.

THE BEGINNING OF

THE SECOND BOOK OF LUCRETIUS.

'Tis pleasant, safely to behold from shore
The rolling ship, and hear the tempest roar:
Not that another's pain is our delight;
But pains unfelt produce the pleasing sight.
'Tis pleasant also to behold from far
The moving legions mingled in the war.
But much more sweet thy labouring steps to guide
To virtue's heights, with wisdom well supplied,
And all the magazines of learning fortified:
From thence to look below on humankind,
Bewilder'd in the maze of life, and blind:
To see vain fools ambitiously contend
For wit and power; their last endeavours bend
To outshine each other, waste their time and health

In search of honour, and pursuit of wealth.
O wretched man! in what a mist of life,
Inclos'd with dangers and with noisy strife,
He spends his little span; and overfeeds
His cramm'd desires with more than nature needs!
For nature wisely stints our appetite,
And craves no more than undisturb'd delight:
Which minds, unmix'd with cares and fears, obtain;
A soul serene, a body void of pain.
So little this corporeal frame requires;
So bounded are our natural desires,
That wanting all, and setting pain aside,
With bare privation sense is satisfied.
If golden sconces hang not on the walls,
To light the costly suppers and the balls;
If the proud palace shines not with the state
Of burnish'd bowls, and of reflected plate;
If well tun'd harps, nor the more pleasing sound
Of voices, from the vaulted roofs rebound;
Yet on the grass, beneath a poplar shade,
By the cool stream our careless limbs are laid;
With cheaper pleasures innocently bless'd,
When the warm spring with gaudy flowers is dress'd.
Nor will the raging fever's fire abate,
With golden canopies and beds of state:
But the poor patient will as soon be sound
On the hard mattrass, or the mother ground.
Then since our bodies are not eas'd the more
By birth, or power, or fortune's wealthy store,
'Tis plain, these useless toys of every kind

As little can relieve the labouring mind:
Unless we could suppose the dreadful sight
Of marshal'd legions moving to the fight,
Could, with their sound and terrible array,
Expel our fears, and drive the thoughts of death away.
But, since the supposition vain appears,
Since clinging cares, and trains of inbred fears,
Are not with sounds to be affrighted thence,
But in the midst of pomp pursue the prince,
Not aw'd by arms, but in the presence bold,
Without respect to purple, or to gold;
Why should not we these pageantries despise;
Whose worth but in our want of reason lies?
For life is all in wand'ring errors led;
And just as children are surpris'd with dread,
And tremble in the dark, so riper years
E'en in broad daylight are possess'd with fears;
And shake at shadows fanciful and vain,
As those which in the breasts of children reign.
These bugbears of the mind, this inward hell,
No rays of outward sunshine can dispel;
But nature and right reason must display
Their beams abroad, and bring the darksome soul to day.

THE LATTER PART OF THE THIRD BOOK OF LUCRETIUS;

AGAINST THE FEAR OF DEATH.

What has this bugbear death to frighten men,
If souls can die, as well as bodies can?
For, as before our birth we felt no pain,
When Punic arms infested land and main,
When heaven and earth were in confusion hurl'd,
For the debated empire of the world,
Which aw'd with dreadful expectation lay,
Sure to be slaves, uncertain who should sway:
So, when our mortal flame shall be disjoin'd,
The lifeless lump uncoupled from the mind,
From sense of grief and pain we shall be free;
We shall not feel, because we shall not be.
Though earth in seas, and seas in heaven were lost,
We should not move, we only should be tost.
Nay, e'en suppose when we have suffer'd fate,
The soul could feel in her divided state,
What's that to us? for we are only we
While souls and bodies in one frame agree.
Nay, though our atoms should revolve by chance,
And matter leap into the former dance;
Though time our life and motion could restore,
And make our bodies what they were before,
What gain to us would all this bustle bring?

The new-made man would be another thing.
When once an interrupting pause is made,
That individual being is decay'd.
We, who are dead and gone, shall bear no part
In all the pleasures, nor shall feel the smart,
Which to that other mortal shall accrue,
Whom of our matter time shall mould anew.
For backward if you look on that long space
Of ages past, and view the changing face
Of matter, toss'd and variously combin'd
In sundry shapes, 'tis easy for the mind
From thence to infer, that seeds of things have been
In the same order as they now are seen:
Which yet our dark remembrance cannot trace,
Because a pause of life, a gaping space,
Has come betwixt, where memory lies dead,
And all the wandering motions from the sense are fled.
For whosoe'er shall in misfortunes live,
Must be, when those misfortunes shall arrive;
And since the man who is not, feels not woe,
(For death exempts him, and wards off the blow,
Which we, the living, only feel and bear)
What is there left for us in death to fear?
When once that pause of life has come between,
'Tis just the same as we had never been.
And therefore if a man bemoan his lot,
That after death his mouldering limbs shall rot,
Or flames, or jaws of beasts devour his mass,
Know, he's an unsincere, unthinking ass.
A secret sting remains within his mind;

The fool is to his own cast offals kind.
He boasts no sense can after death remain;
Yet makes himself a part of life again;
As if some other He could feel the pain.
If, while we live, this thought molest his head,
What wolf or vulture shall devour me dead?
He wastes his days in idle grief, nor can
Distinguish 'twixt the body and the man;
But thinks himself can still himself survive;
And, what when dead he feels not, feels alive.
Then he repines that he was born to die,
Nor knows in death there is no other He,
No living He remains his grief to vent,
And o'er his senseless carcass to lament.
If after death 'tis painful to be torn
By birds, and beasts, then why not so to burn,
Or drench'd in floods of honey to be soak'd,
Imbalm'd to be at once preserv'd and chok'd;
Or on an airy mountain's top to lie,
Expos'd to cold and heaven's inclemency;
Or crowded in a tomb to be oppress'd
With monumental marble on thy breast?
But to be snatch'd from all the household joys,
From thy chaste wife, and thy dear prattling boys,
Whose little arms about thy legs are cast,
And climbing for a kiss prevent their mother's haste,
Inspiring secret pleasure through thy breast;
Ah! these shall be no more: thy friends oppress'd
Thy care and courage now no more shall free;
Ah! wretch, thou criest, ah! miserable me!

One woful day sweeps children, friends, and wife,
And all the brittle blessings of my life!
Add one thing more, and all thou say'st is true;
Thy want and wish of them is vanish'd too:
Which, well consider'd, were a quick relief
To all thy vain imaginary grief.
For thou shalt sleep, and never wake again,
And, quitting life, shalt quit thy living pain.
But we, thy friends, shall all those sorrows find,
Which in forgetful death thou leav'st behind;
No time shall dry our tears, nor drive thee from our mind.
The worst that can befall thee, measur'd right,
Is a sound slumber, and a long good night.
Yet thus the fools, that would be thought the wits,
Disturb their mirth with melancholy fits:
When healths go round, and kindly brimmers flow,
Till the fresh garlands on their foreheads glow,
They whine, and cry, Let us make haste to live,
Short are the joys that human life can give.
Eternal preachers, that corrupt the draught,
And pall the god, that never thinks, with thought;
Idiots with all that thought, to whom the worst
Of death is want of drink, and endless thirst,
Or any fond desire as vain as these.
For, e'en in sleep, the body, wrapt in ease,
Supinely lies, as in the peaceful grave;
And, wanting nothing, nothing can it crave.
Were that sound sleep eternal, it were death;
Yet the first atoms then, the seeds of breath,

Are moving near to sense; we do but shake
And rouse that sense, and straight we are awake.
Then death to us, and death's anxiety,
Is less than nothing, if a less could be.
For then our atoms, which in order lay,
Are scatter'd from their heap, and puff'd away,
And never can return into their place, [space.
When once the pause of life has left an empty
And last, suppose great Nature's voice should call
To thee, or me, or any of us all, [vain,
" What dost thou mean, ungrateful wretch, thou
Thou mortal thing, thus idly to complain,
And sigh and sob, that thou shalt be no more?
For if thy life were pleasant heretofore,
If all the bounteous blessings, I could give,
Thou hast enjoy'd, if thou hast known to live,
And pleasure not leak'd through thee like a sieve;
Why dost thou not give thanks as at a plenteous
feast, [thy rest?
Cramm'd to the throat with life, and rise and take
But if my blessings thou hast thrown away,
If indigested joys pass'd thro', and would not stay,
Why dost thou wish for more to squander still?
If life be grown a load, a real ill,
And I would all thy cares and labours end.
Lay down thy burden, fool, and know thy friend.
To please thee, I have emptied all my store,
I can invent, and can supply no more;
But run the round again, the round I ran before.
Suppose thou art not broken yet with years,

Yet still the selfsame scene of things appears,
And would be ever, couldst thou ever live;
For life is still but life, there's nothing new to give."
What can we plead against so just a bill?
We stand convicted, and our cause goes ill.
But if a wretch, a man oppress'd by fate,
Should beg of Nature to prolong his date,
She speaks aloud to him with more disdain,
Be still, thou martyr fool, thou covetous of pain.
But if an old decrepit sot lament;
What thou (she cries) who hast out-liv'd content!
Dost thou complain, who hast enjoy'd my store?
But this is still the effect of wishing more.
Unsatisfied with all that Nature brings;
Loathing the present, liking absent things;
From hence it comes, thy vain desires, at strife
Within themselves, have tantaliz'd thy life.
And ghastly death appear'd before thy sight,
Ere thou hast gorg'd thy soul and senses with de-
Now leave those joys, unsuiting to thy age, [light.
To a fresh comer, and resign the stage;
Is Nature to be blam'd if thus she chide?
No sure; for 'tis her business to provide
Against this ever-changing frame's decay,
New things to come, and old to pass away.
One being, worn, another being makes;
Chang'd, but not lost; for Nature gives and takes:
New matter must be found for things to come,
And these must waste like those, and follow Nature's doom.

All things, like thee, have time to rise and rot,
And from each other's ruin are begot:
For life is not confin'd to him or thee:
'Tis given to all for use, to none for property.
Consider former ages past and gone,
Whose circles ended long ere thine begun,
Then tell me, fool, what part in them thou hast?
Thus may'st thou judge the future by the past.
What horror seest thou in that quiet state,
What bugbear dreams to fright thee after fate?
No ghost, no goblins, that still passage keep;
But all is there serene, in that eternal sleep.
For all the dismal tales that Poets tell,
Are verified on earth, and not in hell.
No Tantalus looks up with fearful eye,
Or dreads the impending rock to crush him from on high:
But fear of chance on earth disturbs our easy hours,
Or vain imagin'd wrath of vain imagin'd powers.
No Tityus torn by vultures lies in hell;
Nor could the lobes of his rank liver swell
To that prodigious mass, for their eternal meal:
Not though his monstrous bulk had cover'd o'er
Nine spreading acres, or nine thousand more;
Not though the globe of earth had been the giant's floor.
Nor in eternal torments could he lie:
Nor could his corpse sufficient food supply.
But he's the Tityus, who by love oppress,
Or tyrant passion preying on his breast,
And ever anxious thoughts, is robb'd of rest.

The Sisyphus is he, whom noise and strife
Seduce from all the soft retreats of life,
To vex the government, disturb the laws:
Drunk with the fumes of popular applause,
He courts the giddy crowd to make him great,
And sweats and toils in vain, to mount the sovereign seat.
For still to aim at power, and still to fail,
Ever to strive, and never to prevail,
What is it, but, in reason's true account,
To heave the stone against the rising mount?
Which urg'd, and labour'd, and forc'd up with pain,
Recoils, and rolls impetuous down, and smokes along the plain.
Then still to treat thy ever-craving mind
With every blessing, and of every kind,
Yet never fill thy ravening appetite;
Though years and seasons vary thy delight,
Yet nothing to be seen of all the store,
But still the wolf within thee barks for more;
This is the fable's moral, which they tell
Of fifty foolish virgins damn'd in hell
To leaky vessels, which the liquor spill;
To vessels of their sex, which none could ever fill.
As for the dog, the furies, and their snakes,
The gloomy caverns, and the burning lakes,
And all the vain infernal trumpery,
They neither are, nor were, nor e'er can be.
But here on earth the guilty have in view
The mighty pains to mighty mischiefs due;

Racks, prisons, poisons, the Tarpeian rock,
Stripes, hangmen, pitch, and suffocating smoke;
And last, and most, if these were cast behind,
The avenging horror of a conscious mind,
Whose deadly fear anticipates the blow,
And sees no end of punishment and woe;
But looks for more, at the last gasp of breath:
This makes a hell on earth, and life a death.
Meantime when thoughts of death disturb thy head;
Consider, Ancus, great and good, is dead;
Ancus, thy better far, was born to die;
And thou, dost thou bewail mortality?
So many monarchs with their mighty state,
Who rul'd the world, were over-rul'd by fate.
That haughty king, who lorded o'er the main,
And whose stupendous bridge did the wild waves restrain,
(In vain they foam'd, in vain they threaten'd wreck,
While his proud legions march'd upon their back:)
Him death, a greater monarch, overcame;
Nor spar'd his guards the more, for their immortal name.
The Roman chief, the Carthaginian dread,
Scipio, the thunderbolt of war, is dead,
And, like a common slave, by fate in triumph led.
The founders of invented arts are lost;
And wits, who made eternity their boast.
Where now is Homer, who possess'd the throne?
The immortal work remains, the immortal author's gone.
Democritus, perceiving age invade,
His body weaken'd, and his mind decay'd,

Obey'd the summons with a cheerful face;
Made haste to welcome death, and met him half the race.
That stroke e'en Epicurus could not bar,
Though he in wit surpass'd mankind, as far
As does the midday sun the midnight star.
And thou, dost thou disdain to yield thy breath,
Whose very life is little more than death?
More than one half by lazy sleep possest;
And when awake, thy soul but nods at best,
Day-dreams and sickly thoughts revolving in thy breast.
Eternal troubles haunt thy anxious mind,
Whose cause and cure thou never hop'st to find;
But still uncertain, with thyself at strife,
Thou wanderest in the labyrinth of life.
O, if the foolish race of man, who find
A weight of cares still pressing on their mind,
Could find as well the cause of this unrest,
And all this burden lodg'd within the breast;
Sure they would change their course, nor live as now,
Uncertain what to wish or what to vow.
Uneasy both in country and in town,
They search a place to lay their burden down.
One, restless in his palace, walks abroad,
And vainly thinks to leave behind the load:
But straight returns; for he's as restless there;
And finds there's no relief in open air.
Another to his villa would retire,
And spurs as hard as if it were on fire;
No sooner enter'd at his country door,
But he begins to stretch, and yawn, and snore;

Or seeks the city which he left before.
Thus every man o'erworks his weary will,
To shun himself, and to shake off his ill;
The shaking fit returns, and hangs upon him still.
No prospect of repose, nor hope of ease;
The wretch is ignorant of his disease;
Which known would all his fruitless trouble spare;
For he would know the world not worth his care;
Then would he search more deeply for the cause;
And study Nature well, and Nature's laws:
For in this moment lies not the debate,
But on our future, fix'd, eternal state;
That never-changing state, which all must keep,
Whom death has doom'd to everlasting sleep.
Why are we then so fond of mortal life,
Beset with dangers, and maintain'd with strife?
A life, which all our care can never save;
One fate attends us, and one common grave.
Besides, we tread but a perpetual round;
We ne'er strike out, but beat the former ground,
And the same mawkish joys in the same track are found.
For still we think an absent blessing best,
Which cloys, and is no blessing when possest;
A new arising wish expels it from the breast.
The feverish thirst of life increases still;
We call for more and more, and never have our fill;
Yet know not what to-morrow we shall try,
What dregs of life in the last draught may lie:
Nor, by the longest life we can attain,
One moment from the length of death we gain;

For all behind belongs to his eternal reign.
When once the fates have cut the mortal thread,
The man as much to all intents is dead,
Who dies to-day, and will as long be so,
As he who died a thousand years ago.

FROM THE FIFTH BOOK OF LUCRETIUS.

Tum porrò puer, &c.

Thus, like a sailor by a tempest hurl'd
Ashore, the babe is shipwreck'd on the world:
Naked he lies, and ready to expire;
Helpless of all that human wants require;
Expos'd upon unhospitable earth,
From the first moment of his hapless birth.
Straight with foreboding cries he fills the room;
Too true presages of his future doom.
But flocks and herds, and every savage beast,
By more indulgent nature are increas'd,
They want no rattles for their froward mood,
Nor nurse to reconcile them to their food,
With broken words; nor winter blasts they fear,
Nor change their habits with the changing year:
Nor, for their safety, citadels prepare,
Nor forge the wicked instruments of war:
Unlabour'd Earth her bounteous treasure grants,
And Nature's lavish hand supplies their common wants.

TRANSLATIONS FROM HORACE.

THE THIRD ODE OF THE FIRST BOOK OF HORACE;

INSCRIBED TO THE EARL OF ROSCOMMON, ON HIS INTENDED VOYAGE TO IRELAND.

So may the auspicious Queen of Love,
And the Twin Stars, the seed of Jove,
And he who rules the raging wind,
To thee, O sacred ship, be kind;
And gentle breezes fill thy sails,
Supplying soft Etesian gales:
As thou, to whom the Muse commends
The best of poets and of friends,
Dost thy committed pledge restore,
And land him safely on the shore;
And save the better part of me
From perishing with him at sea;
Sure he, who first the passage tried,
In harden'd oak his heart did hide,
And ribs of iron arm'd his side;
Or his at least, in hollow wood
Who tempted first the briny flood:
Nor fear'd the winds' contending roar,

Nor billows beating on the shore;
Nor Hyades portending rain;
Nor all the tyrants of the main.
What form of death could him affright,
Who unconcern'd, with steadfast sight,
Could view the surges mounting steep,
And monsters rolling in the deep!
Could through the ranks of ruin go,
With storms above, and rocks below!
In vain did Nature's wise command
Divide the waters from the land,
If daring ships and men profane
Invade the inviolable main;
The eternal fences over-leap,
And pass at will the boundless deep.
No toil, no hardship can restrain
Ambitious man, inur'd to pain;
The more confin'd, the more he tries,
And at forbidden quarry flies.
Thus bold Prometheus did aspire,
And stole from heaven the seeds of fire:
A train of ills, a ghastly crew,
The robber's blazing track pursue;
Fierce Famine with her meagre face,
And Fevers of the fiery race,
In swarms the offending wretch surround,
All brooding on the blasted ground:
And limping Death, lash'd on by fate,
Comes up to shorten half our date.
This made not Dedalus beware,

With borrow'd wings to sail in air:
To hell Alcides forc'd his way,
Plung'd through the lake, and snatch'd the prey.
Nay scarce the gods, or heavenly climes,
Are safe from our audacious crimes;
We reach at Jove's imperial crown,
And pull the unwilling thunder down.

THE NINTH ODE OF THE FIRST BOOK OF HORACE.

Behold yon mountain's hoary height,
Made higher with new mounts of snow;
Again behold the winter's weight
Oppress the labouring woods below:
And streams, with icy fetters bound,
Benumb'd and cramp'd to solid ground.

With well-heap'd logs dissolve the cold,
And feed the genial hearth with fires;
Produce the wine, that makes us bold,
And sprightly wit and love inspires:
For what hereafter shall betide,
God, if 'tis worth his care, provide.

Let him alone, with what he made,
To toss and turn the world below;
At his command the storms invade;

The winds by his commission blow;
Till with a nod he bids 'em cease,
And then the calm returns, and all is peace.

To-morrow and her works defy,
Lay hold upon the present hour,
And snatch the pleasures passing by,
To put them out of fortune's power:
Nor love, nor love's delights disdain;
Whate'er thou gett'st to-day is gain.

Secure those golden early joys,
That youth unsour'd with sorrow bears,
Ere withering time the taste destroys,
With sickness and unwieldy years.
For active sports, for pleasing rest,
This is the time to be possess'd;
The best is but in season best.

The appointed hour of promis'd bliss,
The pleasing whisper in the dark,
The half unwilling willing kiss,
The laugh that guides thee to the mark,
When the kind nymph would coyness feign,
And hides but to be found again;
These, these are joys, the gods for youth ordain.

THE TWENTY-NINTH ODE OF THE FIRST BOOK OF HORACE;

PARAPHRASED IN PINDARIC VERSE, AND INSCRIBED TO THE RIGHT HON. LAURENCE EARL OF ROCHESTER.

Descended of an ancient line,
That long the Tuscan sceptre sway'd,
Make haste to meet the generous wine,
Whose piercing is for thee delay'd:
The rosy wreath is ready made;
And artful hands prepare
The fragrant Syrian oil, that shall perfume thy hair.

When the wine sparkles from afar,
And the well-natur'd friend cries, Come away;
Make haste, and leave thy business and thy care:
No mortal interest can be worth thy stay.

Leave for a while thy costly country seat;
And, to be great indeed, forget
The nauseous pleasures of the great:
Make haste and come:
Come, and forsake thy cloying store;
Thy turret that surveys, from high,
The smoke, and wealth, and noise of Rome;
And all the busy pageantry
That wise men scorn, and fools adore:
Come, give thy soul a loose, and taste the pleasures of the poor.

Sometimes 'tis grateful to the rich to try
A short vicissitude, and fit of poverty:
A savoury dish, a homely treat,
Where all is plain, where all is neat,
Without the stately spacious room,
The Persian carpet, or the Tyrian loom,
Clear up the cloudy foreheads of the great.

The sun is in the Lion mounted high;
The Syrian star
Barks from afar,
And with his sultry breath infects the sky;
The ground below is parch'd, the heavens above us fry.
The shepherd drives his fainting flock
Beneath the covert of a rock,
And seeks refreshing rivulets nigh:
The Sylvans to their shades retire,
Those very shades and streams new shades and streams require,
And want a cooling breeze of wind to fan the raging fire.

Thou, what befits the new Lord Mayor,
And what the city factions dare,
And what the Gallic arms will do,
And what the quiver-bearing foe,
Art anxiously inquisitive to know:
But God has, wisely, hid from human sight
The dark decrees of future fate,
And sown their seeds in depth of night;
He laughs at all the giddy turns of state;
When mortals search too soon, and fear too late.

Enjoy the present smiling hour;
And put it out of fortune's power:
The tide of business, like the running stream,
Is sometimes high, and sometimes low,
A quiet ebb, or a tempestuous flow,
And always in extreme.
Now with a noiseless gentle course
It keeps within the middle bed;
Anon it lifts aloft the head,
And bears down all before it with impetuous force;
And trunks of trees come rolling down,
Sheep and their folds together drown:
Both house and homestead into seas are borne;
And rocks are from their old foundations torn,
And woods, made thin with winds, their scatter'd honours mourn.

Happy the man, and happy he alone,
He, who can call to-day his own:
He who, secure within, can say,
To-morrow do thy worst, for I have liv'd to-day.
Be fair, or foul, or rain, or shine,
The joys I have possess'd, in spite of fate, are mine.
Not heaven itself upon the past has power;
But what has been, has been, and I have had my hour.

Fortune, that with malicious joy
Does man her slave oppress,
Proud of her office to destroy,
Is seldom pleas'd to bless:

Still various, and unconstant still,
But with an inclination to be ill,
Promotes, degrades, delights in strife,
And makes a lottery of life.
I can enjoy her while she's kind;
But when she dances in the wind,
And shakes the wings, and will not stay,
I puff the prostitute away:
The little or the much she gave is quietly resign'd:
Content with poverty, my soul I arm;
And virtue, though in rags, will keep me warm.

What is't to me,
Who never sail in her unfaithful sea,
If storms arise, and clouds grow black;
If the mast split, and threaten wreck?
Then let the greedy merchant fear
For his ill-gotten gain;
And pray to gods that will not hear,
While the debating winds and billows bear
His wealth into the main.
For me, secure from Fortune's blows,
Secure of what I cannot lose,
In my small pinnace I can sail,
Contemning all the blustering roar;
And running with a merry gale,
With friendly stars my safety seek,
Within some little winding creek;
And see the storm ashore.

THE SECOND EPODE OF HORACE.

How happy in his low degree,
How rich in humble poverty, is he,
Who leads a quiet country life;
Discharg'd of business, void of strife,
And from the griping scrivener free!
Thus, ere the seeds of vice were sown,
Liv'd men in better ages born,
Who plough'd, with oxen of their own,
Their small paternal field of corn.
Nor trumpets summon him to war
Nor drums disturb his morning sleep,
Nor knows he merchants' gainful care,
Nor fears the dangers of the deep.
The clamours of contentious law,
And court and state, he wisely shuns,
Nor brib'd with hopes, nor dar'd with awe,
To servile salutations runs;
But either to the clasping vine
Does the supporting poplar wed,
Or with his pruning-hook disjoin
Unbearing branches from their head,
And grafts more happy in their stead:
Or, climbing to a hilly steep,
He views his herds in vales afar,
Or sheers his overburden'd sheep,

Or mead for cooling drink prepares
Of virgin honey in the jars.
Or, in the now declining year,
When bounteous Autumn rears his head,
He joys to pull the ripen'd pear,
And clust'ring grapes with purple spread.
The fairest of his fruit he serves,
Priapus, thy rewards:
Sylvanus too his part deserves,
Whose care the fences guards.
Sometimes beneath an ancient oak,
Or on the matted grass he lies:
No god of Sleep he need invoke;
The stream, that o'er the pebbles flies,
With gentle slumber crowns his eyes.
The wind, that whistles through the sprays,
Maintains the consort of the song;
And hidden birds, with native lays,
The golden sleep prolong.
But when the blast of winter blows,
And hoary frost inverts the year,
Into the naked woods he goes,
And seeks the tusky boar to rear,
With well-mouth'd hounds and pointed spear!
Or spreads his subtle nets from sight,
With twinkling glasses, to betray
The larks that in the meshes light,
Or makes the fearful hare his prey.
Amidst his harmless easy joys
No anxious care invades his health,

Nor love his peace of mind destroys,
Nor wicked avarice of wealth.
But if a chaste and pleasing wife,
To ease the business of his life,
Divides with him his household care,
Such as the Sabine matrons were,
Such as the swift Apulian's bride,
Sun-burnt and swarthy though she be,
Will fire for winter nights provide,
And without noise will oversee
His children and his family;
And order all things till he come,
Sweaty and overlabour'd, home;
If she in pens his flocks will fold,
And then produce her dairy store,
With wine to drive away the cold,
And unbought dainties of the poor;
Not oysters of the Lucrine lake
My sober appetite would wish,
Nor turbot, or the foreign fish
That rolling tempests overtake,
And hither waft the costly dish.
Not heathpout, or the rarer bird,
Which Phasis or Ionia yields,
More pleasing morsels would afford
Than the fat olives of my fields;
Than shards or mallows for the pot,
That keep the loosen'd body sound,
Or than the lamb, that falls by lot
To the just guardian of my ground.

Amidst these feasts of happy swains,
The jolly shepherd smiles to see
His flock returning from the plains;
The farmer is as pleas'd as he,
To view his oxen sweating smoke,
Bear on their necks the loosen'd yoke:
To look upon his menial crew,
That sit around his cheerful hearth,
And bodies spent in toil renew
With wholesome food and country mirth.
This Morecraft said within himself,
Resolv'd to leave the wicked town;
And live retir'd upon his own,
He call'd his money in;
But the prevailing love of pelf
Soon split him on the former shelf,
He put it out again.

TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF ORMOND.

MY LORD, Anno 1699.

SOME estates are held in England by paying a fine at the change of every lord. I have enjoyed the patronage of your family, from the time of your excellent grandfather to this present day. I have dedicated the translation of the Lives of Plutarch to the first Duke; and have celebrated the memory of your heroic father. Though I am very short of the age of Nestor, yet I have lived to a third generation of your house; and by your Grace's favour am admitted still to hold from you by the same tenure.

I am not vain enough to boast that I have deserved the value of so illustrious a line; but my fortune is the greater, that for three descents they have been pleased to distinguish my poems from those of other men; and have accordingly made me their peculiar care. May it be permitted me to say, that as your grandfather and father were cherished and adorned with honours by two successive monarchs, so I have been esteemed and patronized by the grandfather, the father, and the son, descended from one of the most ancient, most conspicuous, and most deserving families in Europe.

It is true, that by delaying the payment of my last fine, when it was due by your Grace's accession to the titles and patrimonies of your house, I may seem, in rigour of law, to have made a forfeiture of my claim; yet my heart has always been devoted to your service; and since you have been graciously pleased, by your permission of this address, to accept the tender of my duty, it is not yet too late to lay these poems at your feet.

The world is sensible that you worthily succeed not only to the honours of your ancestors, but also to their virtues. The long chain of magnanimity, courage, easiness of access, and desire of doing good, even to the prejudice of your fortune, is so far from being broken in your Grace, that the precious metal yet runs pure to the newest link of it; which I will not call the last, because I hope and pray it may descend to late posterity; and your flourishing youth, and that of your excellent Duchess, are happy omens of my wish.

It is observed by Livy and by others, that some of the noblest Roman families retained a resemblance of their ancestry, not only in their shapes and features, but also in their manners, their qualities, and the distinguishing characters of their minds. Some lines were noted for a stern, rigid virtue, savage, haughty, parsimonious, and unpopular: others were more sweet and affable, made of a more pliant paste, humble, courteous, and obliging; studious of doing charitable offices, and diffusive of the goods which they enjoyed. The last of these is the proper and indelible character of your Grace's family. God Almighty has endued you with a softness, a beneficence, an attractive behaviour winning on the hearts of others; and so sensible of their misery, that the wounds of fortune seem not inflicted on them, but on yourself. You are so ready to redress, that you almost prevent their wishes, and always exceed their expectations; as if what was yours was not your own, and not given you to possess, but to bestow on wanting merit. But this is a topic which I must cast in shades, lest I offend your modesty, which is so far from being ostentatious of the good you do, that it blushes even to have it known; and therefore I must leave you to the satisfaction and testimony of your own conscience, which, though it be a silent panegyric, is yet the best.

You are so easy of access, that Poplicola was not more, whose doors were opened on the outside to save the people even the common civility of asking entrance; where all were equally admitted; where nothing that was reasonable was denied; where misfortune was a powerful recommendation, and where I can scarce forbear saying that want itself was a powerful mediator, and was next to merit.

The history of Peru assures us, that their Incas, above all their titles, esteemed that the highest, which called them Lovers of the Poor; a name more glorious than the Felix, Pius, and Augustus of the Roman Emperors; which were epithets of flattery, deserved by few of them, and not running in a blood like the perpetual gentleness and inherent goodness of the Ormond family.

Gold, as it is the purest, so it is the softest and most ductile of all metals. Iron, which is the hardest, gathers rust, corrodes itself, and is therefore subject to corruption: it was never intended for coins and medals, or to bear the faces and inscriptions of the great. Indeed it is fit for armour, to bear off insults, and preserve the wearer in the day of battle; but the danger once repelled, it is laid aside by the brave, as a

garment too rough for civil conversation: a necessary guard in war, but too harsh and cumbersome in peace, and which keeps off the embraces of a more humane life.

For this reason, my lord, though you have courage in an heroical degree, yet I ascribe it to you but as your second attribute: mercy, beneficence, and compassion, claim precedence, as they are first in the Divine Nature. An intrepid courage, which is inherent in your Grace, is at best but a holiday kind of virtue, to be seldom exercised, and never but in cases of necessity: affability, mildness, tenderness, and a word, which I would fain bring back to its original signification of virtue, I mean good-nature, are of daily use: they are the bread of mankind, and staff of life: neither sighs, nor tears, nor groans, nor curses of the vanquished, follow acts of compassion, and of charity; but a sincere pleasure and serenity of mind, in him who performs an action of mercy, which cannot suffer the misfortunes of another without redress, lest they should bring a kind of contagion along with them, and pollute the happiness which he enjoys.

Yet since the perverse tempers of mankind, since oppression on one side, and ambition on the other, are sometimes the unavoidable occasions of war; that courage, that magnanimity, and resolution, which is born with you, cannot be too much commended. And here it grieves me that I am scanted in the pleasure of dwelling on many of your actions; but *αἰδέομαι Τρῶας* is an expression which Tully often uses, when he would do what he dares not, and fears the censure of the Romans.

I have sometimes been forced to amplify on others; but here, where the subject is so fruitful, that the harvest overcomes the reaper, I am shortened by my chain, and can only see what is forbidden me to reach: since it is not permitted me to commend you, according to the extent of my wishes, and much less is it in my power to make my commendations equal to your merits.

Yet in this frugality of your praises, there are some things which I cannot omit, without detracting from your character. You have so formed your own education, as enables you to pay the debt you owe your country, or, more properly speaking, both your countries; because you were born, I may almost say, in purple, at the Castle of Dublin, when your grandfather was Lord-lieutenant, and have since been bred in the Court of England.

If this address had been in verse, I might have called you, as Claudian calls Mercury, Numen commune, gemino faciens

commercia mundo. The better to satisfy this double obligation, you have early cultivated the genius you have to arms, that when the service of Britain or Ireland shall require your courage and your conduct, you may exert them both to the benefit of either country. You began in the cabinet what you afterwards practised in the camp; and thus both Lucullus and Cæsar (to omit a crowd of shining Romans) formed themselves to war by the study of history, and by the examples of the greatest captains, both of Greece and Italy, before their time. I name those two commanders in particular, because they were better read in chronicle than any of the Roman leaders; and that Lucullus in particular, having only the theory of war from books, was thought fit, without practice, to be sent into the field against the most formidable enemy of Rome. Tully indeed was called the learned Consul in derision; but then he was not born a soldier: his head was turned another way: when he read the Tactics, he was thinking on the bar, which was his field of battle. The knowledge of warfare is thrown away on a general, who dares not make use of what he knows. I commend it only in a man of courage and resolution: in him it will direct his martial spirit, and teach him the way to the best victories, which are those that are least bloody, and which, though achieved by the hand, are managed by the head. Science distinguishes a man of honour from one of those athletic brutes whom undeservedly we call heroes. Cursed be the poet who first honoured with that name a mere Ajax, a man-killing idiot. The Ulysses of Ovid upbraids his ignorance, that he understood not the shield for which he pleaded: there was engraven on it plans of cities, and maps of countries, which Ajax could not comprehend, but looked on them as stupidly as his fellow-beast, the lion. But on the other side, your Grace has given yourself the education of his rival: you have studied every spot of ground in Flanders, which for these ten years past has been the scene of battles and of sieges. No wonder if you performed your part with such applause on a theatre which you understood so well.

If I designed this for a poetical encomium, it were easy to enlarge on so copious a subject; but confining myself to the severity of truth, and to what is becoming me to say, I must not only pass over many instances of your military skill, but also those of your assiduous diligence in the war; and of your personal bravery, attended with an ardent thirst of honour; a long train of generosity; profuseness of doing good; a soul unsatisfied with all it has done; and an unextinguished

desire of doing more. But all this is matter for your own historians; I am, as Virgil says.

Spatiis exclusus iniquis.

Yet not to be wholly silent of all your charities, I must stay a little on one action, which preferred the relief of others to the consideration of yourself. When, in the battle of Landen, your heat of courage (a fault only pardonable to your youth) had transported you so far before your friends, that they were unable to follow, much less to succour you; when you were not only dangerously, but, in all appearance, mortally wounded; when in that desperate condition you were made prisoner, and carried to Namur, at that time in possession of the French; then it was, my lord, that you took a considerable part of what was remitted to you of your own revenues, and, as a memorable instance of your heroic charity, put it into the hands of Count Guiscard, who was Governor of the place, to be distributed among your fellow-prisoners. The French commander, charmed with the greatness of your soul, accordingly consigned it to the use for which it was intended by the donor: by which means the lives of so many miserable men were saved, and a comfortable provision made for their subsistence, who had otherwise perished, had not you been the companion of their misfortune: or rather sent by Providence, like another Joseph, to keep out famine from invading those, whom in humility you called your brethren. How happy was it for those poor creatures, that your Grace was made their fellow-sufferer! And how glorious for you, that you chose to want, rather than not relieve the wants of others! The heathen poet, in commending the charity of Dido to the Trojans, spoke like a Christian:

Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.

All men, even those of a different interest, and contrary principles, must praise this action, as the most eminent for piety, not only in this degenerate age, but almost in any of the former; when men were made de meliore luto; when examples of charity were frequent, and when there were in being

Teucri pulcherrima proles,
Magnanimi heroes nati melioribus annis.

No envy can detract from this: it will shine in history; and, like swans, grow whiter the longer it endures; and the

name of Ormond will be more celebrated in his captivity, than in his greatest triumphs.

But all actions of your Grace are of a piece; as waters keep the tenor of their fountains: your compassion is general, and has the same effect as well on enemies as friends. It is so much in your nature to do good, that your life is but one continued act of placing benefits on many, as the sun is always carrying his light to some part or other of the world. And were it not that your reason guides you where to give, I might almost say that you could not help bestowing more than is consisting with the fortune of a private man, or with the will of any but an Alexander.

What wonder is it then, that, being born for a blessing to mankind, your supposed death in that engagement was so generally lamented through the nation? The concernment for it was as universal as the loss; and though the gratitude might be counterfeit in some, yet the tears of all were real: where every man deplored his private part in that calamity, and even those who had not tasted of your favours, yet built so much on the fame of your beneficence, that they bemoaned the loss of their expectations.

This brought the untimely death of your great father into fresh remembrance; as if the same decree had passed on two short successive generations of the virtuous; and I repeated to myself the same verses, which I had formerly applied to him:

> Ostendunt terris hunc tantùm fata, nec ultrà
> Esse sinunt.

But to the joy not only of all good men, but of mankind in general, the unhappy omen took not place. You are still living to enjoy the blessings and applause of all the good you have performed, the prayers of multitudes whom you have obliged, for your long prosperity; and that your power of doing generous and charitable actions may be as extended as your will; which is by none more zealously desired than by

Your Grace's most humble, most obliged,

And most obedient Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

PREFACE PREFIXED TO THE FABLES.

It is with a poet, as with a man who designs to build, and is very exact, as he supposes, in casting up the cost beforehand; but, generally speaking, he is mistaken in his account, and reckons short in the expense he first intended. He alters his mind as the work proceeds, and will have this or that convenience more, of which he had not thought when he began. So has it happened to me; I have built a house, where I intended but a lodge; yet with better success than a certain nobleman, who, beginning with a dog-kennel, never lived to finish the palace he had contrived.

From translating the first of Homer's Iliads (which I intended as an essay to the whole work) I proceeded to the translation of the twelfth book of Ovid's Metamorphoses, because it contains, among other things, the causes, the beginning, and ending, of the Trojan war. Here I ought in reason to have stopped; but the speeches of Ajax and Ulysses lying next in my way, I could not baulk them. When I had compassed them, I was so taken with the former part of the fifteenth book, (which is the masterpiece of the whole Metamorphoses,) that I enjoined myself the pleasing task of rendering it into English. And now I found, by the number of my verses, that they began to swell into a little volume; which gave me an occasion of looking backward on some beauties of my author, in his former books: there occurred to me the Hunting of the Boar, Cinyras and Myrrha, the good-natured story of Baucis and Philemon, with the rest, which I hope I have translated closely enough, and given them the same turn of verse which they had in the original; and this, I may say without vanity, is not the talent of every poet. He who has arrived the nearest to it, is the ingenious and learned Sandys, the best versifier of the former age; if I may properly call it by that name which was the former part of this concluding century. For Spenser and Fairfax both flourished in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; great masters in our language, and who saw much farther into the beauties of our numbers than those who immediately followed them. Milton was the poetical son of Spenser, and Mr. Waller of Fairfax, for we have our lineal descents and clans as well as other families. Spenser more than once in-

sinuates, that the soul of Chaucer was transfused into his body, and that he was begotten by him two hundred years after his decease. Milton has acknowledged to me, that Spenser was his original, and many besides myself have heard our famous Waller own, that he derived the harmony of his numbers from the Godfrey of Bulloigne, which was turned into English by Mr. Fairfax.

But to return. Having done with Ovid for this time, it came into my mind, that our old English poet, Chaucer, in many things resembled him, and that with no disadvantage on the side of the modern author, as I shall endeavour to prove when I compare them; and as I am, and always have been, studious to promote the honour of my native country, so I soon resolved to put their merits to the trial, by turning some of the Canterbury Tales into our language, as it is now refined; for by this means, both the poets being set in the same light, and dressed in the same English habit, story to be compared with story, a certain judgment may be made betwixt them by the reader, without obtruding my opinion on him. Or if I seem partial to my countryman, and predecessor in the laurel, the friends of antiquity are not few; and besides many of the learned, Ovid has almost all the beaux, and the whole fair sex, his declared patrons. Perhaps I have assumed somewhat more to myself than they allow me, because I have adventured to sum up the evidence; but the readers are the jury, and their privilege remains entire, to decide according to the merits of the cause, or, if they please, to bring it to another hearing before some other court. In the mean time, to follow the thread of my discourse, (as thoughts, according to Mr. Hobbes, have always some connexion) so from Chaucer I was led to think on Boccace, who was not only his contemporary, but also pursued the same studies; wrote novels in prose, and many works in verse; particularly is said to have invented the octave rhyme, or stanza of eight lines, which ever since has been maintained by the practice of all Italian writers, who are, or at least assume the title of, Heroic Poets: he and Chaucer, among other things, had this in common, that they refined their mother tongues; but with this difference, that Dante* had begun to file their language, at least in verse, before the time

* Dante, in one of his prose works, has treated of different sorts of style, which he has divided into three species, the Sublime, the Middle, and Low; the first, he says, is proper for tragedy, the second for comedy, the third for elegy; and he meant by giving his Inferno the title of Comedia, to insinuate, that in this work he wrote

of Boccace, who likewise received no little help from his master Petrarch. But the reformation of their prose was wholly owing to Boccace himself, who is yet the standard of purity in the Italian tongue; though many of his phrases are become obsolete, as in process of time it must needs happen. Chaucer, (as you have formerly been told by our learned Mr. Rymer) first adorned and amplified our barren tongue from the Provencall, which was then the most polished of all the modern languages; but this subject has been copiously treated by that great critic, who deserves no little commendation from us his countrymen. For these reasons of time, and resemblance of genius in Chaucer and Boccace, I resolved to join them in my present work; to which I have added some original papers of my own; which, whether they are equal or inferior to my other poems, an author is the most improper judge, and therefore I leave them wholly to the mercy of the reader. I will hope the best, that they will not be condemned; but if they should, I have the excuse of an old gentleman, who mounting on horseback before some ladies, when I was present, got up somewhat heavily, but desired of the fair spectators, that they would count fourscore and eight before they judged him. By the mercy of God, I am already come within twenty years of his number, a cripple in my limbs; but what decays are in my mind, the reader must determine. I think myself as vigorous as ever in the faculties of my soul, excepting only my memory, which is not impaired to any great degree; and if I lose not more of it, I have no great reason to complain. What judgment I had, increases rather than diminishes; and thoughts, such as they are, come crowding in so fast upon me, that my only difficulty is to choose or to reject; to run them into verse, or to give them the other harmony of prose. I have so long studied and practised both, that they are grown into a habit, and become familiar to me. In short, though I may lawfully plead some part of the old gentleman's excuse, yet I will reserve it till I think I have greater need, and ask no grains of allowance for the faults of this my present work, but those which are given of course to human frailty. I will not trouble my reader with the shortness of time in which I writ it, or the several intervals of sickness: they who think too well of their own performances, are apt to boast in their prefaces how little time

in the middle style. This seems to have been the reason why he gave it this title, which it has been thought difficult to account for.
Dr. J. W.

their works have cost them, and what other business of more importance interfered; but the reader will be as apt to ask the question, why they allowed not a longer time to make their works more perfect? and why they had so despicable an opinion of their judges, as to thrust their indigested stuff upon them, as if they deserved no better.

With this account of my present undertaking, I conclude the first part of this discourse: in the second part, as at a second sitting, though I alter not the draught, I must touch the same features over again, and change the dead colouring of the whole. In general I will only say, that I have written nothing which savours of immorality or profaneness; at least, I am not conscious to myself of any such intention. If there happen to be found an irreverent expression, or a thought too wanton, they are crept into my verses through my inadvertency; if the searchers find any in the cargo, let them be staved or forfeited, like contrabanded goods; at least, let their authors be answerable for them, as being but imported merchandise, and not of my own manufacture. On the other side, I have endeavoured to choose such fables, both ancient and modern, as contain in each of them some instructive moral, which I could prove by induction, but the way is tedious; and they leap foremost into sight, without the reader's trouble of looking after them. I wish I could affirm with a safe conscience, that I had taken the same care in all my former writings; for it must be owned, that supposing verses are never so beautiful or pleasing, yet if they contain any thing which shocks religion, or good manners, they are at best what Horace says of good numbers without good sense,

Versus inopes rerum, nugæque canoræ.

Thus far, I hope, I am right in court, without renouncing my other right of self-defence, where I have been wrongfully accused, and my sense wire-drawn into blasphemy or bawdry, as it has often been by a religious lawyer, in a late pleading against the stage; in which he mixes truth with falsehood, and has not forgotten the old rule of calumniating strongly, that something may remain.

I resume the thread of my discourse with the first of my translation, which was the first Iliad of Homer. If it shall please God to give me longer life, and moderate health, my intentions are to translate the whole Ilias; provided still that I meet with those encouragements from the public, which may enable me to proceed in my undertaking with some cheerfulness. And this I dare assure the world beforehand, that I

have found, by trial, Homer a more pleasing task than Virgil, (though I say not the translation will be less laborious.) For the Grecian is more according to my genius, than the Latin poet. In the works of the two authors we may read their manners and natural inclinations, which are wholly different. Virgil was of a quiet, sedate temper; Homer was violent, impetuous, and full of fire. The chief talent of Virgil was propriety of thoughts, and ornament of words; Homer was rapid in his thoughts, and took all the liberties both of numbers, and of expressions, which his language, and the age in which he lived, allowed him: Homer's invention was more copious, Virgil's more confined; so that if Homer had not led the way, it was not in Virgil to have begun heroic poetry; for nothing can be more evident, than that the Roman poem is but the second part of the Ilias; a continuation of the same story, and the persons already formed; the manners of Æneas are those of Hector superadded to those which Homer gave him. The Adventures of Ulysses in the Odysseis are imitated in the first Six Books of Virgil's Æneis; and though the accidents are not the same (which would have argued him of a servile copying, and total barrenness of invention), yet the seas were the same, in which both the heroes wandered; and Dido cannot be denied to be the poetical daughter of Calypso. The six latter books of Virgil's poem are the four and twenty Iliads contracted: a quarrel occasioned by a lady, a single combat, battles fought, and a town besieged. I say not this in derogation to Virgil, neither do I contradict any thing which I have formerly said in his just praise: for his Episodes are almost wholly of his own invention; and the form, which he has given to the telling, makes the tale his own, even though the original story had been the same. But this proves, however, that Homer taught Virgil to design; and if invention be the first virtue of an Epic poet, then the Latin poem can only be allowed the second place. Mr. Hobbes, in the preface to his own bald translation of the Ilias (studying poetry as he did mathematics, when it was too late), Mr. Hobbes, I say, begins the praise of Homer where he should have ended it. He tells us, that the first beauty of an Epic poem consists in diction, that is, in the choice of words, and harmony of numbers: now the words are the colouring of the work, which in the order of nature is last to be considered. The design, the disposition, the manners, and the thoughts, are all before it: where any of those are wanting or imperfect, so much wants or is imperfect in the imitation of human life; which is in the very definition of a poem. Words indeed, like glaring

colours, are the first beauties that arise, and strike the sight: but if the draught be false or lame, the figures ill-disposed, the manners obscure or inconsistent, or the thoughts unnatural, then the finest colours are but daubing, and the piece is a beautiful monster at the best. Neither Virgil nor Homer were deficient in any of the former beauties; but in this last, which is expression, the Roman poet is at least equal to the Grecian, as I have said elsewhere; supplying the poverty of his language by his musical ear, and by his diligence. But to return: our two great poets, being so different in their tempers, one choleric and sanguine, the other phlegmatic and melancholic; that which makes them excel in their several ways is, that each of them has followed his own natural inclination, as well in forming the design, as in the execution of it. The very heroes show their authors; Achilles is hot, impatient, revengeful, Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer, &c. Æneas patient, considerate, careful of his people, and merciful to his enemies; ever submissive to the will of heaven, quò fata trahunt, retrahuntque, sequamur. I could please myself with enlarging on this subject, but am forced to defer it to a fitter time. From all I have said I will only draw this inference, that the action of Homer being more full of vigour than that of Virgil, according to the temper of the writer, is of consequence more pleasing to the reader. One warms you by degrees; the other sets you on fire all at once, and never intermits his heat. 'Tis the same difference which Longinus makes betwixt the effects of eloquence in Demosthenes and Tully. One persuades; the other commands. You never cool while you read Homer, even not in the second book (a graceful flattery to his countrymen); but he hastens from the ships, and concludes not that book till he has made you an amends by the violent playing of a new machine. From thence he hurries on his action with variety of events, and ends it in less compass than two months. This vehemence of his, I confess, is more suitable to my temper; and therefore I have translated his first book with greater pleasure than any part of Virgil; but it was not a pleasure without pains: the continual agitations of the spirits must needs be a weakening of any constitution, especially in age; and many pauses are required for refreshment betwixt the heats; the Iliad of itself being a third part longer than all Virgil's works together.

This is what I thought needful in this place to say of Homer. I proceed to Ovid and Chaucer, considering the former only in relation to the latter. With Ovid ended the golden age of the Roman tongue: from Chaucer the purity of the

English tongue began. The manners of the poets were not unlike: both of them were well bred, well natured, amorous, and libertine, at least in their writings, it may be also in their lives. Their studies were the same, philosophy and philology. Both of them were knowing in astronomy, of which Ovid's books of the Roman feasts, and Chaucer's treatise of the Astrolabe, are sufficient witnesses. But Chaucer was likewise an astrologer, as were Virgil, Horace, Persius, and Manilius. Both writ with wonderful facility and clearness: neither were great inventors; for Ovid only copied the Grecian fables; and most of Chaucer's stories were taken from his Italian contemporaries, or their predecessors. Boccace's Decameron was first published; and from thence our Englishman has borrowed many of his Canterbury tales; yet that of Palamon and Arcite was written in all probability by some Italian wit in a former age, as I shall prove hereafter: the tale of Grizild was the invention of Petrarch; by him sent to Boccace; from whom it came to Chaucer: Troilus and Cressida was also written by a Lombard author; but much amplified by our English translator, as well as beautified; the genius of our countrymen in general being rather to improve an invention, than to invent themselves; as is evident not only in our poetry, but in many of our manufactures. I find I have anticipated already, and taken up from Boccace before I come to him; but there is so much less behind; and I am of the temper of most kings, who love to be in debt, are all for present money, no matter how they pay it afterwards: besides, the nature of a preface is rambling; never wholly out of the way, nor in it. This I have learned from the practice of honest Montaign, and return at my pleasure to Ovid and Chaucer, of whom I have little more to say. Both of them built on the inventions of other men; yet since Chaucer had something of his own, as the Wife of Bath's Tale, the Cock and the Fox, which I have translated, and some others, I may justly give our countryman the precedence in that part; since I can remember nothing of Ovid which was wholly his. Both of them understood the manners, under which name I comprehend the passions, and, in a larger sense, the descriptions of persons, and their very habits; for an example, I see Baucis and Philemon as perfectly before me, as if some ancient painter had drawn them; and all the pilgrims in the Canterbury tales, their humours, their features, and the very dress, as distinctly as if I had supped with them at the Tabard in Southwark; yet even there too the figures in Chaucer are much more lively, and set in a better light: which though I

have not time to prove, yet I appeal to the reader, and am sure he will clear me from partiality. The thoughts and words remain to be considered in the comparison of the two poets; and I have saved myself one half of that labour, by owning that Ovid lived when the Roman tongue was in its meridian, Chaucer in the dawning of our language; therefore that part of the comparison stands not on an equal foot, any more than the diction of Ennius and Ovid, or of Chaucer and our present English. The words are given up as a post not to be defended in our poet, because he wanted the modern art of fortifying. The thoughts remain to be considered, and they are to be measured only by their propriety; that is, as they flow more or less naturally from the persons described, on such and such occasions. The vulgar judges, which are nine parts in ten of all nations, who call conceits and jingles wit, who see Ovid full of them, and Chaucer altogether without them, will think me little less than mad, for preferring the Englishman to the Roman: yet, with their leave, I must presume to say, that the things they admire are only glittering trifles, and so far from being witty, that in a serious poem they are nauseous, because they are unnatural. Would any man, who is ready to die for love, describe his passion like Narcissus? Would he think of inopem me copia fecit, and a dozen more of such expressions, poured on the neck of one another, and signifying all the same thing? If this were wit, was this a time to be witty, when the poor wretch was in the agony of death? This is just John Littlewit in Bartholomew Fair, who had a conceit (as he tells you) left him in his misery; a miserable conceit. On these occasions the poet should endeavour to raise pity; but instead of this, Ovid is tickling you to laugh. Virgil never made use of such machines, when he was moving you to commiserate the death of Dido: he would not destroy what he was building. Chaucer makes Arcite violent in his love, and unjust in the pursuit of it; yet when he came to die, he made him think more reasonably: he repents not of his love, for that had altered his character; but acknowledges the injustice of his proceedings, and resigns Emilia to Palamon. What would Ovid have done on this occasion? He would certainly have made Arcite witty on his death-bed. He had complained he was farther off from possession, by being so near, and a thousand such boyisms, which Chaucer rejected as below the dignity of the subject. They, who think otherwise, would by the same reason prefer Lucan and Ovid to Homer and Virgil, and Martial to all four of them. As for the turn of words, in

which Ovid particularly excels all poets; they are sometimes a fault, and sometimes a beauty, as they are used properly or improperly; but in strong passions always to be shunned, because passions are serious, and will admit no playing. The French have a high value for them; and I confess, they are often what they call delicate, when they are introduced with judgment; but Chaucer writ with more simplicity, and followed nature more closely, than to use them. I have thus far, to the best of my knowledge, been an upright judge betwixt the parties in competition, not meddling with the design nor the disposition of it; because the design was not their own, and in the disposing of it they were equal. It remains that I say somewhat of Chaucer in particular.

In the first place, as he is the father of English poetry, so I hold him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or the Romans Virgil: he is a perpetual fountain of good sense, learned in all sciences, and therefore speaks properly on all subjects: as he knew what to say, so he knows also when to leave off, a continence which is practised by few writers, and scarcely by any of the ancients, excepting Virgil and Horace. One of our late great poets is sunk in his reputation, because he could never forgive any conceit which came in his way, but swept like a drag-net, great and small. There was plenty enough, but the dishes were ill-sorted; whole pyramids of sweetmeats for boys and women, but little of solid meat for men: all this proceeded not from any want of knowledge, but of judgment; neither did he want that in discerning the beauties and faults of other poets; but only indulged himself in the luxury of writing; and perhaps knew it was a fault, but hoped the reader would not find it. For this reason, though he must always be thought a great poet, he is no longer esteemed a good writer; and for ten impressions, which his works have had in so many successive years, yet at present a hundred books are scarcely purchased once a twelvemonth: for as my last Lord Rochester said, though somewhat profanely, Not being of God, he could not stand.

Chaucer followed nature everywhere, but was never so bold to go beyond her; and there is a great difference of being Poeta and nimis Poeta, if we believe Catullus, as much as betwixt a modest behaviour and affectation. The verse of Chaucer, I confess, is not harmonious to us; but it is like the eloquence of one whom Tacitus commends, it was auribus istius temporis accommodata: they who lived with him, and some time after him thought it musical; and it continues so

even in our judgment, if compared with the numbers of Lidgate and Gower, his contemporaries: there is the rude sweetness of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleasing, though not perfect. It is true, I cannot go so far as he who published the last edition of him; for he would make us believe the fault is in our ears, and that there were really ten syllables in a verse where we find but nine: but this opinion is not worth confuting; it is so gross and obvious an error, that common sense (which is a rule in every thing but matters of faith and revelation) must convince the reader, that equality of numbers in every verse which we call Heroic was either not known, or not always practised in Chaucer's age. It were an easy matter to produce some thousands of his verses, which are lame for want of half a foot, and sometimes a whole one, and which no pronunciation can make otherwise. We can only say, that he lived in the infancy of our poetry, and that nothing is brought to perfection at the first. We must be children before we grow men. There was an Ennius, and in process of time a Lucilius, and a Lucretius, before Virgil and Horace; even after Chaucer there was a Spenser, a Harrington, a Fairfax, before Waller and Denham were in being: and our numbers were in their nonage till these last appeared. I need say little of his parentage, life, and fortunes: they are to be found at large in all the editions of his works. He was employed abroad and favoured by Edward the Third, Richard the Second, and Henry the Fourth, and was poet, as I suppose, to all three of them. In Richard's time, I doubt, he was a little dipt in the rebellion of the commons; and being brother-in-law to John of Gaunt, it was no wonder if he followed the fortunes of that family; and was well with Henry the Fourth when he had deposed his predecessor. Neither is it to be admired, that Henry, who was a wise as well as a valiant prince, who claimed by succession, and was sensible that his title was not sound, but was rightfully in Mortimer, who had married the heir of York; it was not to be admired, I say, if that great politician should be pleased to have the greatest wit of those times in his interests, and to be the trumpet of his praises. Augustus had given him the example, by the advice of Mæcenas, who recommended Virgil and Horace to him; whose praises helped to make him popular while he was alive, and after his death have made him precious to posterity. As for the religion of our poet, he seems to have some little bias towards the opinions of Wickliff, after John of Gaunt his patron; somewhat of which appears in the tale

of Piers Plowman: yet I cannot blame him for inveighing so sharply against the vices of the clergy in his age; their pride, their ambition, their pomp, their avarice, their worldly interest, deserved the lashes which he gave them, both in that and in most of his Canterbury tales: neither has his contemporary Boccace spared them. Yet both those poets lived in much esteem with good and holy men in orders; for the scandal which is given by particular priests, reflects not on the sacred function. Chaucer's Monk, his Chanon, and his Fryer, took not from the character of his Good Parson. A satyrical poet is the check of the laymen on bad priests. We are only to take care, that we involve not the innocent with the guilty in the same condemnation. The good cannot be too much honoured, nor the bad too coarsely used: for the corruption of the best becomes the worst. When a clergyman is whipped, his gown is first taken off, by which the dignity of his order is secured: if he be wrongfully accused, he has his action of slander; and it is at the poet's peril if he transgress the law. But they will tell us, that all kind of satire, though never so well deserved by particular priests, yet brings the whole order into contempt. Is then the peerage of England any thing dishonoured, when a peer suffers for his treason? If he be libelled, or any way defamed, he has his Scandalum Magnatum to punish the offender. They, who use this kind of argument, seem to be conscious to themselves of somewhat which has deserved the poet's lash; and are less concerned for their public capacity, than for their private; at least there is pride at the bottom of their reasoning. If the faults of men in orders are only to be judged among themselves, they are all in some sort parties: for, since they say the honour of their order is concerned in every member of it, how can we be sure, that they will be impartial judges? How far I may be allowed to speak my opinion in this case, I know not: but I am sure a dispute of this nature caused mischief in abundance betwixt a king of England and an archbishop of Canterbury; one standing up for the laws of his land, and the other for the honour (as he called it) of God's Church; which ended in the murder of the prelate, and in the whipping of his majesty from post to pillar for his penance. The learned and ingenious Dr. Drake has saved me the labour of inquiring into the esteem and reverence which the priests have had of old; and I would rather extend than diminish any part of it: yet I must needs say, that when a priest provokes me without any occasion given him, I have no reason, unless it be the charity of

a Christian, to forgive him. Prior læsit is justification sufficient in the Civil Law. If I answer him in his own language, self-defence, I am sure, must be allowed me; and if I carry it farther, even to a sharp recrimination, somewhat may be indulged to human frailty. Yet my resentment has not wrought so far, but that I have followed Chaucer in his character of a holy man, and have enlarged on that subject with some pleasure, reserving to myself the right, if I shall think fit hereafter, to describe another sort of priests, such as are more easily to be found than the good parson; such as have given the last blow to Christianity in this age, by a practice so contrary to their doctrine. But this will keep cold till another time. In the mean while, I take up Chaucer where I left him. He must have been a man of a most wonderful comprehensive nature, because, as it has been truly observed of him, he has taken into the compass of his Canterbury tales the various manners and humours (as we now call them) of the whole English nation, in his age. Not a single character has escaped him. All his pilgrims are severally distinguished from each other; and not only in their inclinations, but in their very physiognomies and persons. Baptista Porta could not have described their natures better, than by the marks which the poet gives them. The matter and manner of their tales, and of their telling, are so suited to their different educations, humours, and callings, that each of them would be improper in any other mouth. Even the grave and serious characters are distinguished by their several sorts of gravity: their discourses are such as belong to their age, their calling, and their breeding; such as are becoming of them, and of them only. Some of his persons are vicious, and some virtuous; some are unlearned, or (as Chaucer calls them) lewd, and some are learned. Even the ribaldry of the low characters is different: the Reeve, the Miller, and the Cook, are several men, and distinguished from each other, as much as the mincing lady prioress, and the broad-speaking gap-toothed wife of Bath. But enough of this: there is such a variety of game springing up before me, that I am distracted in my choice, and know not which to follow. 'Tis sufficient to say, according to the proverb, that here is God's plenty. We have our forefathers and great grandames all before us, as they were in Chaucer's days; their general characters are still remaining in mankind, and even in England, though they are called by other names than those of Monks and Friars, and Chanons, and lady Abbesses, and Nuns: for mankind is ever the

same, and nothing lost out of nature, though every thing is altered. May I have leave to do myself the justice, (since my enemies will do me none, and are so far from granting me to be a good poet, that they will not allow me so much as to be a Christian, or a moral man) may I have leave, I say, to inform my reader, that I have confined my choice to such tales of Chaucer as savour nothing of immodesty. If I had desired more to please than to instruct, the Reeve, the Miller, the Shipman, the Merchant, the Sumner, and, above all, the Wife of Bath, in the prologue to her tale, would have procured me as many friends and readers, as there are beaux and ladies of pleasure in the town. But I will no more offend against good manners: I am sensible, as I ought to be, of the scandal I have given by my loose writings; and make what reparation I am able, by this public acknowledgment. If any thing of this nature, or of profaneness, be crept into these poems, I am so far from defending it, that I disown it. Totum hoc indictum volo. Chaucer makes another manner of apology for his broad speaking, and Boccace makes the like; but I will follow neither of them. Our countryman, in the end of his characters, before the Canterbury tales, thus excuses the ribaldry, which is very gross in many of his novels:

> But first, I pray you of your courtesy,
> That ye ne arrette it nought my villany,
> Though that I plainly speak in this mattere
> To tellen you her words, and eke her chere:
> Ne though I speak her words properly,
> For this ye knowen as well as I,
> Who shall tellen a tale after a man,
> He mote rehearse as nye, as ever he can:
> Everich word of it been in his charge,
> All speke he, never so rudely, ne large.
> Or else he mote tellen his tale untrue,
> Or feine things, or find words new:
> He may not spare, although he were his brother,
> He mote as well say o word as another.
> Christ spake himself full broad in holy writ,
> And well I wote no villany is it,
> Eke Plato saith, who so can him rede,
> The words mote been cousin to the dede.

Yet if a man should have inquired of Boccace or of Chaucer, what need they had of introducing such characters, where obscene words were proper in their mouths, but very indecent to be heard; I know not what answer they could have made; for that reason, such tale shall be left untold by me. You have here a specimen of Chaucer's language,

which is so obsolete, that his sense is scarce to be understood; and you have likewise more than one example of his unequal numbers, which were mentioned before.—Yet many of his verses consist of ten syllables, and the words not much behind our present English: as for example, these two lines, in the description of the carpenter's young wife:

> Wincing she was, as is a jolly colt,
> Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.

I have almost done with Chaucer, when I have answered some objections relating to my present work. I find some people are offended that I have turned these tales into modern English; because they think them unworthy of my pains, and look on Chaucer as a dry, old-fashioned wit, not worth reviving. I have often heard the late Earl of Leicester say, that Mr. Cowley himself was of that opinion; who having read him over at my lord's request, declared he had no taste of him. I dare not advance my opinion against the judgment of so great an author: but I think it fair, however, to leave the decision to the public: Mr. Cowley was too modest to set up for a dictator; and being shocked perhaps with his old style, never examined into the depth of his good sense. Chaucer, I confess, is a rough diamond, and must first be polished, ere he shines. I deny not, likewise, that living in our early days of poetry, he writes not always of a piece; but sometimes mingles trivial things with those of greater moment. Sometimes also, though not often, he runs riot, like Ovid, and knows not when he has said enough. But there are more great wits besides Chaucer, whose fault is their excess of conceits, and those ill sorted. An author is not to write all he can, but only all he ought. Having observed this redundancy in Chaucer, (as it is an easy matter for a man of ordinary parts to find a fault in one of greater) I have not tied myself to a literal translation; but have often omitted what I judged unnecessary, or not of dignity enough to appear in the company of better thoughts. I have presumed farther, in some places, and added somewhat of my own where I thought my author was deficient, and had not given his thoughts their true lustre, for want of words in the beginning of our language. And to this I was the more emboldened, because (if I may be permitted to say it of myself) I found I had a soul congenial to his, and that I had been conversant in the same studies. Another poet, in another age, may take the same liberty with my writings; if at least they live long enough to deserve correction. It was also

necessary sometimes to restore the sense of Chaucer, which was lost or mangled in the errors of the press: let this example suffice at present; in the story of Palamon and Arcite, where the temple of Diana is described, you find these verses, in all the editions of our author:

> There saw I Danè turned into a tree,
> I mean not the goddess Diane,
> But Venus daughter, which that hight Danè:

Which after a little consideration I knew was to be reformed into this sense, that Daphne, the daughter of Peneus, was turned into a tree. I durst not make thus bold with Ovid, lest some future Milbourn should arise, and say, I varied from my author, because I understood him not.

But there are other judges who think I ought not to have translated Chaucer into English, out of a quite contrary notion: they suppose there is a certain veneration due to his old language; and that it is a little less than profanation and sacrilege to alter it. They are farther of opinion, that somewhat of his good sense will suffer in this transfusion, and much of the beauty of his thoughts will infallibly be lost, which appear with more grace in their old habit. Of this opinion was that excellent person, whom I mentioned, the late Earl of Leicester, who valued Chaucer as much as Mr. Cowley despised him. My lord dissuaded me from this attempt, (for I was thinking of it some years before his death) and his authority prevailed so far with me, as to defer my undertaking while he lived, in deference to him: yet my reason was not convinced with what he urged against it. If the first end of a writer be to be understood, then as his language grows obsolete, his thoughts must grow obscure: multa renascentur quæ nunc cecidere; cadentque, quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus, quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi. When an ancient word for its sound and significancy deserves to be revived, I have that reasonable veneration for antiquity, to restore it. All beyond this is superstition. Words are not like landmarks, so sacred as never to be removed; customs are changed, and even statutes are silently repealed, when the reason ceases for which they were enacted. As for the other part of the argument, that his thoughts will lose of their original beauty, by the innovation of words; in the first place, not only their beauty, but their being is lost, where they are no longer understood, which is the present case. I grant that something must be lost in all transfusion, that is, in all translations, but the sense will

remain, which would otherwise be lost, or at least be maimed, when it is scarce intelligible; and that but to a few. How few are there who can read Chaucer, so as to understand him perfectly? And if imperfectly, then with less profit and no pleasure. 'Tis not for the use of some old Saxon friends, that I have taken these pains with him: let them neglect my version, because they have no need of it. I made it for their sakes who understand sense and poetry as well as they, when that poetry and sense is put into words which they understand. I will go farther, and dare to add, that what beauties I lose in some places, I give to others which had them not originally; but in this I may be partial to myself; let the reader judge, and I submit to his decision. Yet I think I have just occasion to complain of them, who, because they understand Chaucer, would deprive the greater part of their countrymen of the same advantage, and hoard him up, as misers do their grandam gold, only to look on it themselves, and hinder others from making use of it. In sum, I seriously protest, that no man ever had, or can have, a greater veneration for Chaucer, than myself. I have translated some part of his works, only that I might perpetuate his memory, or at least refresh it, amongst my countrymen. If I have altered him any where for the better, I must at the same time acknowledge, that I could have done nothing without him: Facile est inventis addere, is no great commendation; and I am not so vain to think I have deserved a greater. I will conclude what I have to say of him singly, with this one remark: a lady of my acquaintance, who keeps a kind of correspondence with some authors of the fair sex in France, has been informed by them, that Mademoiselle de Scudery, who is as old as Sibyl, and inspired like her by the same god of poetry, is at this time translating Chaucer into modern French. From which I gather, that he has been formerly translated into the old Provencal (for how she should come to understand old English I know not). But the matter of fact being true, it makes me think that there is something in it like fatality; that, after certain periods of time, the fame and memory of great wits should be renewed, as Chaucer is both in France and England. If this be wholly chance, 'tis extraordinary, and I dare not call it more, for fear of being taxed with superstition.

Boccace comes last to be considered, who, living in the same age with Chaucer, had the same genius, and followed the same studies: both writ novels, and each of them cultivated his mother tongue. But the greatest resemblance of

our two modern authors being in their familiar style, and pleasing way of relating comical adventures, I may pass it over, because I have translated nothing from Boccace of that nature. In the serious part of poetry, the advantage is wholly on Chaucer's side; for though the Englishman has borrowed many tales from the Italian, yet it appears that those of Boccace were not generally of his own making, but taken from authors of former ages, and by him only modelled: so that what there was of invention in either of them, may be judged equal. But Chaucer has refined on Boccace, and has mended the stories which he has borrowed, in his way of telling; though prose allows more liberty of thought, and the expression is more easy, when unconfined by numbers. Our countryman carries weight, and yet wins the race at disadvantage. I desire not the reader should take my word: and therefore I will set two of their discourses on the same subject, in the same light, for every man to judge betwixt them. I translated Chaucer first, and amongst the rest, pitched on the wife of Bath's tale: not daring, as I have said, to adventure on her prologue, because it is too licentious: there Chaucer introduces an old woman of mean parentage, whom a youthful knight of noble blood was forced to marry, and consequently loathed her; the crone being in bed with him on the wedding-night, and finding his aversion, endeavours to win his affection by reason, and speaks a good word for herself (as who could blame her?) in hope to mollify the sullen bridegroom. She takes her topics from the benefits of poverty, the advantages of old age and ugliness, the vanity of youth, and the silly pride of ancestry and titles without inherent virtue, which is the true nobility. When I had closed Chaucer, I returned to Ovid, and translated some more of his fables; and by this time had so far forgotten the wife of Bath's tale, that, when I took up Boccace unawares, I fell on the same argument of preferring virtue to nobility of blood, and titles, in the story of Sigismunda; which I had certainly avoided for the resemblance of the two discourses, if my memory had not failed me. Let the reader weigh them both; and if he thinks me partial to Chaucer, it is in him to right Boccace.

I prefer in our countryman, far above all his other stories, the noble poem of Palamon and Arcite, which is of the Epic kind, and perhaps not much inferior to the Ilias or the Æneis: the story is more pleasing than either of them, the manners as perfect, the diction as poetical, the learning as deep and various; and the disposition full as artful; only it includes a greater length of time, as taking up seven years at least; but

Aristotle has left undecided the duration of the action; which yet is easily reduced into the compass of a year, by a narration of what preceded the return of Palamon to Athens. I had thought for the honour of our nation, and more particularly for his, whose laurel, though unworthy, I have worn after him, that this story was of English growth, and Chaucer's own; but I was undeceived by Boccace; for casually looking on the end of his seventh Giornata, I found Dioneo (under which name he shadows himself) and Fiametta (who represents his mistress the natural daughter of Robert, king of Naples) of whom these words are spoken, Dioneo e la Fiametta granpezza contarono insieme d' Arcita, e di Palamone: by which it appears that this story was written before the time of Boccace; but the name of its author being wholly lost, Chaucer is now become an original; and I question not but the poem has received many beauties by passing through his noble hands. Besides this tale, there is another of his own invention, after the manner of the Provencals, called The Flower and the Leaf; with which I was so particularly pleased, both for the invention and the moral, that I cannot hinder myself from recommending it to the reader.

As a corollary to this preface, in which I have done justice to others, I owe somewhat to myself: not that I think it worth my time to enter the lists with one Milbourn, and one Blackmore, but barely to take notice, that such men there are who have written scurrilously against me, without any provocation. Milbourn, who is in orders, pretends amongst the rest this quarrel to me, that I have fallen foul on priesthood: if I have, I am only to ask pardon of good priests, and am afraid his part of the reparation will come to little. Let him be satisfied that he shall not be able to force himself upon me for an adversary. I contemn him too much to enter into competition with him: His own translations of Virgil have answered his criticisms on mine. If (as they say, he has declared in print) he prefers the version of Ogilby to mine, the world has made him the same compliment: for it is agreed on all hands, that he writes even below Ogilby: that, you will say, is not easily to be done; but what cannot Milbourn bring about? I am satisfied, however, that while he and I live together, I shall not be thought the worst poet of the age. It looks as if I had desired him underhand to write so ill against me: but upon my honest word I have not bribed him to do me this service, and am wholly guiltless of his pamphlet. 'Tis true, I should be glad, if I could persuade him to continue his good offices, and write such another critique on any thing of mine: for I

find by experience he has a great stroke with the reader, when he condemns any of my poems, to make the world have a better opinion of them. He has taken some pains with my poetry; but nobody will be persuaded to take the same with his. If I had taken to the church (as he affirms, but which was never in my thoughts) I should have had more sense, if not more grace, than to have turned myself out of my benefice by writing libels on my parishioners. But his account of my manners and my principles are of a piece with his cavils and his poetry: and so I have done with him for ever.

As for the City Bard, or Knight Physician, I hear his quarrel to me is, that I was the author of Absalom and Achitophel, which he thinks is a little hard on his fanatic patrons in London.

But I will deal the more civilly with his two poems, because nothing ill is to be spoken of the dead: and therefore peace be to the Manes of his Arthurs. I will only say, that it was not for this noble knight that I drew the plan of an Epic poem on king Arthur, in my preface to the translation of Juvenal. The guardian angels of kingdoms were machines too ponderous for him to manage; and therefore he rejected them, as Dares did the whirlbats of Eryx, when they were thrown before him by Entellus. Yet from that preface he plainly took his hint: for he began immediately upon the story; though he had the baseness not to acknowledge his benefactor; but instead of it, to traduce me in a libel.

I shall say the less of Mr. Collier, because in many things he has taxed me justly; and I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts and expressions of mine, which can be truly argued of obscenity, profaneness, or immorality; and retract them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph; if he be my friend, as I have given him no personal occasion to be otherwise, he will be glad of my repentance. It becomes me not to draw my pen in the defence of a bad cause, when I have so often drawn it for a good one. Yet it were not difficult to prove that in many places he has perverted my meaning by his glosses; and interpreted my words into blasphemy and bawdry, of which they were not guilty; besides that he is too much given to horse-play in his raillery; and comes to battle like a dictator from the plough. I will not say, The zeal of God's house has eaten him up; but I am sure it has devoured some part of his good manners and civility. It might also be doubted whether it were altogether zeal, which prompted him to this rough manner of proceeding; perhaps it became not one of his function to rake into the rubbish of

ancient and modern plays; a divine might have employed his pains to better purpose, than in the nastiness of Plautus and Aristophanes; whose examples, as they excuse not me, so it might be possibly supposed, that he read them not without some pleasure. They who have written commentaries on those poets, or on Horace, Juvenal, and Martial, have explained some vices, which, without their interpretation, had been unknown to modern times. Neither has he judged impartially betwixt the former age and us.

There is more bawdry in one Play of Fletcher's, called The Custom of the Country, than in all ours together. Yet this has been often acted on the stage in my remembrance. Are the times so much more reformed now, than they were five and twenty years ago? If they are, I congratulate the amendment of our morals. But I am not to prejudice the cause of my fellow-poets, though I abandon my own defence: they have some of them answered for themselves, and neither they nor I can think Mr. Collier so formidable an enemy, that we should shun him. He has lost ground at the latter end of the day, by pursuing his point too far, like the Prince of Conde at the battle of Senneffe: from immoral plays, to no plays: ab abusu ad usum, non valet consequentia. But being a party, I am not to erect myself into a judge. As for the rest of those who have written against me, they are such scoundrels, that they deserve not the least notice to be taken of them. Blackmore and Milbourn are only distinguished from the crowd, by being remembered to their infamy.

——— Demetri, Teque Tigelli
Discipulorum inter jubeo plorare cathedras.

TALES FROM CHAUCER.

TO HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF ORMOND, WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM OF

PALAMON AND ARCITE.

MADAM,

THE bard who first adorn'd our native tongue,
Tun'd to his British lyre this ancient song:
Which Homer might without a blush rehearse,
And leaves a doubtful palm in Virgil's verse:
He match'd their beauties, where they most excel;
Of love sung better, and of arms as well.
Vouchsafe, illustrious Ormond, to behold
What power the charms of beauty had of old;
Nor wonder if such deeds of arms were done,
Inspir'd by two fair eyes, that sparkled like your own.
If Chaucer by the best idea wrought,
And poets can divine each other's thought,
The fairest nymph before his eyes he set;
And then the fairest was Plantagenet;
Who three contending princes made her prize,
And rul'd the rival nations with her eyes:
Who left immortal trophies of her fame,
And to the noblest order gave the name.

Like her, of equal kindred to the throne,
You keep her conquests, and extend your own:
As when the stars, in their ethereal race,
At length have roll'd around the liquid space,
At certain periods they resume their place,
From the same point of heaven their course advance,
And move in measures of their former dance;
Thus, after length of ages, she returns,
Restor'd in you, and the same place adorns;
Or you perform her office in the sphere,
Born of her blood, and make a new Platonic year.
O true Plantagenet, O race divine,
(For beauty still is fatal to the line)
Had Chaucer liv'd that angel face to view,
Sure he had drawn his Emily from you;
Or had you liv'd to judge the doubtful right,
Your noble Palamon had been the knight;
And conquering Theseus from his side had sent
Your generous lord, to guide the Theban govern-
Time shall accomplish that; and I shall see [ment.
A Palamon in him, in you an Emily.
Already have the fates your path prepar'd,
And sure presage your future sway declar'd:
When westward, like the sun, you took your way,
And from benighted Britain bore the day,
Blue Triton gave the signal from the shore,
The ready Nereids heard, and swam before
To smooth the seas; a soft Etesian gale
But just inspir'd, and gently swell'd the sail;
Portunus took his turn, whose ample hand

Heav'd up the lighten'd keel, and sunk the sand.
And steer'd the sacred vessel safe to land.
The land, if not restrain'd, had met your way,
Projected out a neck, and jutted to the sea.
Hibernia, prostrate at your feet, ador'd,
In you, the pledge of her expected lord;
Due to her isle; a venerable name;
His father and his grandsire known to fame;
Aw'd by that house, accustom'd to command,
The sturdy kerns in due subjection stand;
Nor bear the reins in any foreign hand.
At your approach, they crowded to the port;
And scarcely landed, you create a court:
As Ormond's harbinger, to you they run;
For Venus is the promise of the sun.
The waste of civil wars, their towns destroy'd,
Pales unhonour'd, Ceres unemploy'd,
Were all forgot; and one triumphant day
Wip'd all the tears of three campaigns away.
Blood, rapines, massacres, were cheaply bought,
So mighty recompense your beauty brought.
As when the dove returning bore the mark
Of earth restor'd to the long-lab'ring ark,
The relics of mankind, secure of rest,
Oped every window to receive the guest,
And the fair bearer of the message bless'd;
So, when you came, with loud repeated cries,
The nation took an omen from your eyes,
And God advanc'd his rainbow in the skies,
To sign inviolable peace restor'd; [accor
The saints, with solemn shouts, proclaim'd the new

When at your second coming you appear,
(For I foretell that millenary year)
The sharpen'd share shall vex the soil no more,
But earth unbidden shall produce her store;
The land shall laugh, the circling ocean smile,
And Heaven's indulgence bless the holy isle.
Heaven from all ages has reserv'd for you
That happy clime, which venom never knew;
Or if it had been there, your eyes alone
Have power to chase all poison but their own.

Now in this interval, which fate has cast
Betwixt your future glories and your past,
This pause of power, 'tis Ireland's hour to mourn;
While England celebrates your safe return,
By which you seem the seasons to command,
And bring our summers back to their forsaken land,

The vanquish'd isle our leisure must attend,
Till the fair blessing we vouchsafe to send;
Nor can we spare you long, tho' often we may lend.
The dove was twice employ'd abroad, before
The world was dried, and she return'd no more.

Nor dare we trust so soft a messenger,
New from her sickness, to that northern air;
Rest here awhile your lustre to restore,
That they may see you as you shone before:
For yet, the eclipse not wholly past, you wade
Through some remains, and dimness of a shade.

A subject in his prince may claim a right,
Nor suffer him with strength impair'd to fight;
Till force returns, his ardour we restrain,
And curb his warlike wish to cross the main.

Now past the danger, let the learn d begin
The inquiry, where disease could enter in;
How those malignant atoms forc'd their way,
What in the faultless frame they found to make
their prey?
Where every element was weigh'd so well,
That heaven alone, who mix'd the mass, could tell
Which of the four ingredients could rebel;
And where, imprison'd in so sweet a cage,
A soul might well be pleas'd to pass an age.
And yet the fine materials made it weak:
Porcelain, by being pure, is apt to break:
E'en to your breast the sickness durst aspire;
And, forc'd from that fair temple to retire,
Profanely set the holy place on fire.
In vain your lord, like young Vespasian, mourn'd,
When the fierce flames the sanctuary burn'd:
And I prepar'd to pay in verses rude
A most detested act of gratitude:
E'en this had been your elegy, which now
Is offer'd for your health, the table of my vow.
Your angel sure our Morley's mind inspir'd,
To find the remedy your ill requir'd;
As once the Macedon, by Jove's decree,
Was taught to dream a herb for Ptolemee:
Or Heaven, which had such over-cost bestow'd,
As scarce it could afford to flesh and blood,
So lik'd the frame, he would not work anew,
To save the charges of another you.
Or by his middle science did he steer,

And saw some great contingent good appear
Well worth a miracle to keep you here:
And for that end, preserv'd the precious mould,
Which all the future Ormonds was to hold;
And meditated in his better mind
An heir from you, which may redeem the failing kind.

Blest be the power which has at once restor'd
The hopes of lost succession to your lord;
Joy to the first and last of each degree,
Virtue to courts, and, what I long'd to see,
To you the Graces, and the Muse to me.
O daughter of the rose, whose cheeks unite
The differing titles of the red and white;
Who heaven's alternate beauty well display,
The blush of morning, and the milky way;
Whose face is paradise, but fenc'd from sin:
For God in either eye has plac'd a cherubin.

All is your lord's alone; e'en absent, he
Employs the care of chaste Penelope.
For him you waste in tears your widow'd hours,
For him your curious needle paints the flowers;
Such works of old imperial dames were taught;
Such, for Ascanius, fair Elisa wrought.
The soft recesses of your hours improve
The three fair pledges of your happy love:
All other parts of pious duty done,
You owe your Ormond nothing but a son;
To fill in future times his father's place,
And wear the garter of his mother's race.

PALAMON AND ARCITE;*

OR, THE KNIGHT'S TALE.

BOOK I.

In days of old, there liv'd, of mighty fame,
A valiant prince, and Theseus was his name:
A chief, who more in feats of arms excell'd,
The rising nor the setting sun beheld.
Of Athens he was lord; much land he won,
And added foreign countries to his crown.
In Scythia with the warrior queen he strove,
Whom first by force he conquer'd, then by love;
He brought in triumph back the beauteous dame,
With whom her sister, fair Emilia, came.
With honour to his home let Theseus ride,
With love to friend, and fortune for his guide,
And his victorious army at his side.
I pass their warlike pomp, their proud array,
Their shouts, their songs, their welcome on the way:
But, were it not too long, I would recite
The feats of Amazons, the fatal fight
Betwixt the hardy queen and hero knight;

* Chaucer was more than sixty years old, and Dryden seventy, when they wrote Palamon. Sade says, in 1359 Boccace sent a copy of Dante, written by his own hand, to Petrarch, who, it seems, was jealous of Dante, and in his answer speaks coldly of him.—*Sade*, p. 507. *Dr. J. W.*

The town besieg'd, and how much blood it cost
The female army, and the Athenian host;
The spousals of Hippolita the queen;
What tilts and tourneys at the feast were seen;
The storm at their return, the ladies' fear:
But these, and other things, I must forbear.
The field is spacious I design to sow,
With oxen far unfit to draw the plough:
The remnant of my tale is of a length
To tire your patience, and to waste my strength;
And trivial accidents shall be forborne,
That others may have time to take their turn;
As was at first enjoin'd us by mine host:
That he whose tale is best, and pleases most,
Should win his supper at our common cost.

And therefore where I left, I will pursue
This ancient story, whether false or true,
In hope it may be mended with a new.
The prince I mention'd, full of high renown,
In this array drew near the Athenian town;
When in his pomp and utmost of his pride,
Marching, he chanc'd to cast his eye aside,
And saw a choir of mourning dames, who lay
By two and two across the common way:
At his approach they rais'd a rueful cry,
And beat their breasts, and held their hands on high,
Creeping and crying, till they seiz'd at last
His courser's bridle, and his feet embrac'd.

Tell me, said Theseus, what and whence you are
And why this funeral pageant you prepare?

Is this the welcome of my worthy deeds,
To meet my triumph in ill omen'd weeds?
Or envy you my praise, and would destroy
With grief my pleasures, and pollute my joy?
Or are you injur'd, and demand relief?
Name your request, and I will ease your grief.
The most in years of all the mourning train
Began; (but swooned first away for pain)
Then scarce recover'd spoke: Nor envy we
Thy great renown, nor grudge thy victory;
'Tis thine, O king, the afflicted to redress,
And fame has fill'd the world with thy success:
We wretched women sue for that alone,
Which of thy goodness is refus'd to none;
Let fall some drops of pity on our grief,
If what we beg be just, and we deserve relief:
For none of us, who now thy grace implore,
But held the rank of sovereign queen before;
Till thanks to giddy chance, which never bears
That mortal bliss should last for length of years,
She cast us headlong from our high estate,
And here in hope of thy return we wait:
And long have waited in the temple nigh,
Built to the gracious goddess Clemency.
But reverence thou the power whose name it bears,
Relieve the oppress'd, and wipe the widow's tears.
I, wretched I, have other fortune seen,
The wife of Capaneus, and once a queen:
At Thebes he fell; curst be the fatal day!
And all the rest thou seest in this array,

To make their moan, their lords in battle lost
Before that town besieg'd by our confederate host:
But, Creon, old and impious, who commands
The Theban city, and usurps the lands,
Denies the rites of funeral fires to those
Whose breathless bodies yet he calls his foes.
Unburn'd, unburied, on a heap they lie;
Such is their fate, and such his tyranny;
No friend has leave to bear away the dead,
But with their lifeless limbs his hounds are fed.
At this she shriek'd aloud; the mournful train
Echo'd her grief, and, groveling on the plain,
With groans, and hands upheld, to move his mind,
Besought his pity to their helpless kind!

The prince was touch'd, his tears began to flow,
And, as his tender heart would break in two,
He sigh'd; and could not but their fate deplore,
So wretched now, so fortunate before.
Then lightly from his lofty steed he flew,
And raising one by one the suppliant crew,
To comfort each, full solemnly he swore,
That by the faith which knights to knighthood bore,
And whate'er else to chivalry belongs,
He would not cease, till he reveng'd their wrongs:
That Greece should see perform'd what he declar'd;
And cruel Creon find his just reward.
He said no more, but, shunning all delay,
Rode on; nor enter'd Athens on his way;
But left his sister and his queen behind,
And wav'd his royal banner in the wind:

Where in an argent field the god of war
Was drawn triumphant on his iron car;
Red was his sword, and shield, and whole attire,
And all the godhead seem'd to glow with fire;
E'en the ground glitter'd where the standard flew,
And the green grass was dyed to sanguine hue.
High on his pointed lance his pennon bore
His Cretan fight, the conquer'd Minotaure:
The soldiers shout around with generous rage,
And in that victory their own presage.
He prais'd their ardour; inly pleased to see
His host the flower of Grecian chivalry.
All day he march'd, and all the ensuing night,
And saw the city with returning light.
The process of the war I need not tell,
How Theseus conquer'd, and how Creon fell:
Or after, how by storm the walls were won,
Or how the victor sack'd and burn'd the town:
How to the ladies he restor'd again
The bodies of their lords in battle slain:
And with what ancient rites they were interr'd;
All these to fitter times shall be deferr'd:
I spare the widows' tears, their woful cries,
And howling at their husbands' obsequies;
How Theseus at these funerals did assist,
And with what gifts the mourning dames dismiss'd.
Thus when the victor chief had Creon slain,
And conquer'd Thebes, he pitch'd upon the plain
His mighty camp, and, when the day return'd,
The country wasted, and the hamlets burn'd,

And left the pillagers, to rapine bred,
Without control to strip and spoil the dead.
There, in a heap of slain, among the rest
Two youthful knights they found beneath a load oppress'd
Of slaughter'd foes, whom first to death they sent,
The trophies of their strength, a bloody monument.
Both fair, and both of royal blood they seem'd,
Whom kinsmen to the crown the heralds deem'd;
That day in equal arms they fought for fame;
Their swords, their shields, their surcoats were the same.
Close by each other laid, they press'd the ground,
Their manly bosoms pierc'd with many a griesly wound;
Nor well alive, nor wholly dead they were,
But some faint signs of feeble life appear:
The wand'ring breath was on the wing to part,
Weak was the pulse, and hardly heav'd the heart.
These two were sisters' sons; and Arcite one,
Much fam'd in fields, with valiant Palamon.
From these their costly arms the spoilers rent,
And softly both convey'd to Theseus' tent:
Whom known of Creon's line, and cur'd with care,
He to his city sent as prisoners of the war,
Hopeless of ransom, and condemn'd to lie
In durance, doom'd a ling'ring death to die.
This done, he march'd away with warlike sound,
And to his Athens turn'd with laurels crown'd,
Where happy long he liv'd, much lov'd, and more renown'd.

But in a tower, and never to be loos'd,
The woful captive kinsmen are inclos'd:
Thus year by year they pass, and day by day,
Till once, 'twas on the morn of cheerful May,
The young Emilia, fairer to be seen
Than the fair lily on the flowery green,
More fresh than May herself in blossoms new,
For with the rosy colour strove her hue,
Wak'd, as her custom was, before the day,
To do the observance due to sprightly May:
For sprightly May commands our youth to keep
The vigils of her night, and breaks their sluggard sleep;
Each gentle breast with kindly warmth she moves;
Inspires new flames, revives extinguish'd loves.
In this remembrance Emily ere day
Arose, and dress'd herself in rich array;
Fresh as the month, and as the morning fair:
Adown her shoulders fell her length of hair:
A riband did the braided tresses bind,
The rest was loose, and wanton'd in the wind:
Aurora had but newly chas'd the night,
And purpled o'er the sky with blushing light,
When to the garden walk she took her way,
To sport and trip along in cool of day
And offer maiden vows in honour of the May.
At every turn she made a little stand,
And thrust among the thorns her lily hand
To draw the rose, and every rose she drew
She shook the stalk, and brush'd away the dew:

Then party-colour'd flowers of white and red
She wove, to make a garland for her head:
This done, she sung and caroll'd out so clear,
That men and angels might rejoice to hear:
E'en wond'ring Philomel forgot to sing:
And learn'd from her to welcome in the spring.
The tower, of which before was mention made,
Within whose keep the captive knights were laid,
Built of a large extent, and strong withal,
Was one partition of the palace wall;
The garden was inclos'd within the square,
Where young Emilia took the morning air.
It happen'd Palamon, the prisoner knight,
Restless of woe, arose before the light,
And with his jailor's leave desir'd to breathe
An air more wholesome than the damps beneath.
This granted, to the tower he took his way,
Cheer'd with the promise of a glorious day:
Then cast a languishing regard around,
And saw, with hateful eyes, the temples crown'd
With golden spires, and all the hostile ground.
He sigh'd, and turn'd his eyes, because he knew
'Twas but a larger jail he had in view:
Then look'd below, and from the castle's height
Beheld a nearer and more pleasing sight:
The garden, which before he had not seen,
In spring's new livery clad of white and green,
Fresh flowers in wide parterres, and shady walks between.
This view'd, but not enjoy'd, with arms across

He stood, reflecting on his country's loss;
Himself an object of the public scorn,
And often wish'd he never had been born.
At last, for so his destiny requir'd,
With walking giddy, and with thinking tir'd,
He through a little window cast his sight,
Though thick of bars, that gave a scanty light:
But e'en that glimmering serv'd him to descry
The inevitable charms of Emily.

Scarce had he seen, but seiz'd with sudden smart,
Stung to the quick, he felt it at his heart;
Struck blind with overpowering light he stood,
Then started back amaz'd, and cried aloud.

Young Arcite heard; and up he ran with haste,
To help his friend, and in his arms embrac'd;
And ask'd him why he look'd so deadly wan,
And whence and how his change of cheer began?
Or who had done the offence? But if, said he,
Your grief alone is hard captivity;
For love of heaven with patience undergo
A cureless ill, since fate will have it so:
So stood our horoscope in chains to lie,
And Saturn in the dungeon of the sky,
Or other baleful aspect, rul'd our birth,
When all the friendly stars were under earth:
Whate'er betides, by destiny 'tis done;
And better bear like men, than vainly seek to shun.
Nor of my bonds, said Palamon again,
Nor of unhappy planets I complain;
But when my mortal anguish caus'd my cry,

That moment I was hurt through either eye;
Pierc'd with a random shaft, I faint away,
And perish with insensible decay:
A glance of some new goddess gave the wound,
Whom, like Acteon, unaware I found.
Look how she walks along yon shady space,
Not Juno moves with more majestic grace;
And all the Cyprian queen is in her face.
If thou art Venus (for thy charms confess
That face was form'd in heaven, nor art thou less;
Disguis'd in habit, undisguis'd in shape),
O help us captives from our chains to 'scape;
But if our doom be past in bonds to lie
For life, and in a loathsome dungeon die,
Then be thy wrath appeas'd with our disgrace,
And show compassion to the Theban race,
Oppress'd by tyrant power! While yet he spoke,
Arcite on Emily had fix'd his look;
The fatal dart a ready passage found,
And deep within his heart infix'd the wound:
So that if Palamon were wounded sore,
Arcite was hurt as much as he, or more:
Then from his inmost soul he sigh'd, and said,
The beauty I behold has struck me dead:
Unknowingly she strikes; and kills by chance;
Poison is in her eyes, and death in every glance.
O, I must ask; nor ask alone, but move
Her mind to mercy, or must die for love.
Thus Arcite: and thus Palamon replies,
(Eager his tone, and ardent were his eyes.)

Speak'st thou in earnest, or in jesting vein?
Jesting, said Arcite, suits but ill with pain.
It suits far worse (said Palamon again,
And bent his brows) with men who honour weigh,
Their faith to break, their friendship to betray;
But worst with thee, of noble lineage born,
My kinsman, and in arms my brother sworn.
Have we not plighted each our holy oath,
That one should be the common good of both;
One soul should both inspire, and neither prove
His fellow's hindrance in pursuit of love?
To this before the gods we gave our hands,
And nothing but our death can break the bands.
This binds thee, then, to further my design:
As I am bound by vow to further thine:
Nor can'st, nor dar'st thou, traitor, on the plain
Appeach my honour, or thine own maintain,
Since thou art of my council, and the friend
Whose faith I trust, and on whose care depend:
And wouldst thou court my lady's love, which I
Much rather than release would choose to die?
But thou, false Arcite, never shalt obtain
Thy bad pretence; I told thee first my pain
For first my love began ere thine was born;
Thou as my council, and my brother sworn,
Art bound to assist my eldership of right,
Or justly to be deem'd a perjur'd knight.
Thus Palamon: but Arcite with disdain
In haughty language thus replied again:
Forsworn thyself: the traitor's odious name

I first return, and then disprove thy claim.
If love be passion, and that passion nurs'd
With strong desires, I lov'd the lady first.
Canst thou pretend desire, whom zeal inflam'd
To worship, and a power celestial nam'd?
Thine was devotion to the blest above,
I saw the woman, and desir'd her love;
First own'd my passion, and to thee commend
The important secret, as my chosen friend,
Suppose (which yet I grant not) thy desire
A moment elder than my rival fire;
Can chance of seeing first thy title prove?
And know'st thou not, no law is made for love;
Law is to things which to free choice relate;
Love is not in our choice, but in our fate;
Laws are but positive; love's power, we see,
Is Nature's sanction, and her first decree.
Each day we break the bond of human laws
For love, and vindicate the common cause.
Laws for defence of civil rights are plac'd,
Love throws the fences down, and makes a general waste:
Maids, widows, wives, without distinction fall;
The sweeping deluge, love, comes on, and covers all.
If then the laws of friendship I transgress,
I keep the greater, while I break the less;
And both are mad alike, since neither can possess.
Both hopeless to be ransom'd, never more
To see the sun, but as he passes o'er.

Like Æsop's hounds contending for the bone,

Each pleaded right, and would be lord alone:
The fruitless fight continued all the day,
A cur came by, and snatch'd the prize away.
As courtiers therefore justle for a grant, [want,
And when they break their friendship, plead their
So thou, if fortune will thy suit advance,
Love on, nor envy me my equal chance:
For I must love, and am resolv'd to try
My fate, or failing in the adventure die. [new'd,
Great was their strife, which hourly was re-
Till each with mortal hate his rival view'd:
Now friends no more, nor walking hand in hand;
But when they met, they made a surly stand;
And glar'd like angry lions as they pass'd,
And wish'd that every look might be their last.
It chanc'd at length, Pirithous came to attend
This worthy Theseus, his familiar friend;
Their love in early infancy began,
And rose as childhood ripen'd into man,
Companions of the war; and lov'd so well,
That when one died, as ancient stories tell,
His fellow to redeem him went to hell.
But to pursue my tale; to welcome home
His warlike brother is Pirithous come:
Arcite of Thebes was known in arms long since,
And honour'd by this young Thessalian prince.
Theseus to gratify his friend and guest,

352 *Great was their strife,* &c.] These six spirited lines are entirely our author's own, and an improvement on the simple original. *J. W.*

Who made our Arcite's freedom his request,
Restor'd to liberty the captive knight,
But on these hard conditions I recite:
That if hereafter Arcite should be found
Within the compass of Athenian ground,
By day or night, or on whate'er pretence,
His head should pay the forfeit of the offence.
To this Pirithous for his friend agreed,
And on his promise was the prisoner freed.
Unpleas'd and pensive hence he takes his way,
At his own peril; for his life must pay.
Who now but Arcite mourns his bitter fate,
Finds his dear purchase, and repents too late?
What have I gain'd, he said, in prison pent,
If I but change my bonds for banishment?
And banish'd from her sight, I suffer more
In freedom than I felt in bonds before;
Forc'd from her presence, and condemn'd to live;
Unwelcome freedom, and unthank'd reprieve:
Heaven is not but where Emily abides,
And where she's absent, all is hell besides.
Next to my day of birth, was that accurst,
Which bound my friendship to Pirithous first:
Had I not known that prince, I still had been
In bondage, and had still Emilia seen:
For though I never can her grace deserve,
'Tis recompense enough to see and serve.
O Palamon, my kinsman and my friend,
How much more happy fates thy love attend!
Thine is the adventure; thine the victory:

Well has thy fortune turn'd the dice for thee:
Thou on that angel's face may'st feed thine eyes,
In prison, no; but blissful paradise!
Thou daily seest that sun of beauty shine,
And lov'st at least in love's extremest line.
I mourn in absence, love's eternal night;
And who can tell but since thou hast her sight,
And art a comely, young, and valiant knight,
Fortune (a various power) may cease to frown,
And by some ways unknown thy wishes crown?
But I, the most forlorn of humankind,
Nor help can hope, nor remedy can find;
But doom'd to drag my loathsome life in care
For my reward, must end it in despair.
Fire, water, air, and earth, and force of fates,
That governs all, and Heaven that all creates,
Nor art, nor nature's hand can ease my grief;
Nothing but death, the wretch's last relief:
Then farewell youth, and all the joys that dwell
With youth and life, and life itself farewell.
But why, alas! do mortal men in vain
Of fortune, fate, or Providence complain?
God gives us what he knows our wants require,
And better things than those which we desire:
Some pray for riches; riches they obtain;
But, watch'd by robbers, for their wealth are slain:
Some pray from prison to be freed; and come,
When guilty of their vows, to fall at home;
Murder'd by those they trusted with their life,
A favour'd servant, or a bosom wife.

Such dear-bought blessings happen every day,
Because we know not for what things to pray.
Like drunken sots about the street we roam:
Well knows the sot he has a certain home:
Yet knows not how to find the uncertain place,
And blunders on, and staggers every pace.
Thus all seek happiness; but few can find,
For far the greater part of men are blind.
This is my case, who thought our utmost good
Was in one word of freedom understood:
The fatal blessing came: from prison free,
I starve abroad, and lose the sight of Emily.
Thus Arcite; but if Arcite thus deplore
His sufferings, Palamon yet suffers more.
For when he knew his rival freed and gone,
He swells with wrath; he makes outrageous moan:
He frets, he fumes, he stares, he stamps the ground;
The hollow tower with clamours rings around:
With briny tears he bath'd his fetter'd feet,
And dropp'd all o'er with agony of sweat.
Alas! he cried! I, wretch, in prison pine,
Too happy rival, while the fruit is thine:
Thou liv'st at large, thou draw'st thy native air,
Pleas'd with thy freedom, proud of my despair:
Thou mayst, since thou hast youth and courage join'd,
A sweet behaviour and a solid mind,
Assemble ours, and all the Theban race,
To vindicate on Athens thy disgrace;
And after, by some treaty made, possess
Fair Emily, the pledge of lasting peace.

So thine shall be the beauteous prize, while I
Must languish in despair, in prison die.
Thus all the advantage of the strife is thine,
Thy portion double joys, and double sorrows mine.
The rage of jealousy then fir'd his soul,
And his face kindled like a burning coal:
Now cold despair, succeeding in her stead,
To livid paleness turns the glowing red.
His blood, scarce liquid, creeps within his veins.
Like water which the freezing wind constrains.
Then thus he said: Eternal Deities,
Who rule the world with absolute decrees,
And write whatever time shall bring to pass,
With pens of adamant, on plates of brass;
What, is the race of humankind your care
Beyond what all his fellow creatures are;
He with the rest is liable to pain,
And like the sheep, his brother-beast, is slain.
Cold, hunger, prisons, ills without a cure,
All these he must, and guiltless oft endure;
Or does your justice, power, or prescience fail:
When the good suffer, and the bad prevail?
What worse to wretched virtue could befall,
If fate or giddy fortune govern'd all?
Nay, worse than other beasts is our estate;
Them, to pursue their pleasures, you create;
We, bound by harder laws, must curb our will,
And your commands, not our desires, fulfil;
Then when the creature is unjustly slain,
Yet after death at least he feels no pain;

But man in life surcharg'd with woe before,
Not freed when dead, is doom'd to suffer more.
A serpent shoots his sting at unaware;
An ambush'd thief forelays a traveller:
The man lies murder'd, while the thief and snake,
One gains the thickets, and one thrids the brake.
This let divines decide; but well I know,
Just, or unjust, I have my share of woe,
Through Saturn seated in a luckless place,
And Juno's wrath, that persecutes my race;
Or Mars and Venus, in a quartile, move
My pangs of jealousy for Arcite's love.
Let Palamon oppress'd in bondage mourn,
While to his exil'd rival we return.
By this, the sun, declining from his height,
The day had shorten'd to prolong the night:
The lengthen'd night gave length of misery
Both to the captive lover and the free.
For Palamon in endless prison mourns,
And Arcite forfeits life if he returns:
The banish'd never hopes his love to see,
Nor hopes the captive lord his liberty:
'Tis hard to say who suffers greater pains:
One sees his love, but cannot break his chains:
One free, and all his motions uncontroll'd, [hold.
Beholds whate'er he would, but what he would be-

512 *'Tis hard to say*] In the original is an apostrophe, which in my humble opinion greatly heightens the pathos.

You lovers axe I now this question,
Who hath the werse, Arcite or Palamon? *J. W.*

Judge as you please, for I will haste to tell
What fortune to the banish'd knight befell.
When Arcite was to Thebes return'd again,
The loss of her he lov'd renew'd his pain;
What could be worse, than never more to see
His life, his soul, his charming Emily?
He rav'd with all the madness of despair,
He roar'd, he beat his breast, he tore his hair,
Dry sorrow in his stupid eyes appears,
For, wanting nourishment, he wanted tears:
His eyeballs in their hollow sockets sink,
Bereft of sleep he loaths his meat and drink.
He withers at his heart, and looks as wan
As the pale spectre of a murder'd man:
That pale turns yellow, and his face receives
The faded hue of sapless boxen leaves:
In solitary groves he makes his moan,
Walks early out, and ever is alone:
Nor, mix'd in mirth, in youthful pleasures shares,
But sighs when songs and instruments he hears.
His spirits are so low, his voice is drown'd,
He hears as from afar, or in a swoon,
Like the deaf murmurs of a distant sound:
Uncomb'd his locks, and squalid his attire,
Unlike the trim of love and gay desire;
But full of museful mopings, which presage
The loss of reason, and conclude in rage.
This when he had endur'd a year and more,
Now wholly chang'd from what he was before,
It happen'd once, that, slumbering as he lay,

He dream'd, (his dream began at break of day)
That Hermes o'er his head in air appear'd,
And with soft words his drooping spirits cheer'd:
His hat, adorn'd with wings, disclos'd the god,
And in his hand he bore the sleep-compelling rod:
Such as he seem'd, when, at his sire's command,
On Argus' head he laid the snaky wand.
Arise, he said, to conquering Athens go,
There fate appoints an end of all thy woe.
The fright awaken'd Arcite with a start,
Against his bosom bounc'd his heaving heart;
But soon he said, with scarce-recover'd breath,
And thither will I go, to meet my death,
Sure to be slain; but death is my desire,
Since in Emilia's sight I shall expire.
By chance he spied a mirror while he spoke,
And gazing there beheld his alter'd look;
Wond'ring, he saw his features and his hue
So much were chang'd, that scarce himself he knew.
A sudden thought then starting in his mind,
Since I in Arcite cannot Arcite find,
The world may search in vain with all their eyes,
But never penetrate through this disguise.
Thanks to the change which grief and sickness give,
In low estate I may securely live,
And see unknown my mistress day by day.
He said; and cloth'd himself in coarse array:
A labouring hind in show; then forth he went,
And to the Athenian towers his journey bent:
One squire attended in the same disguise,

Made conscious of his master's enterprize.
Arriv'd at Athens, soon he came to court,
Unknown, unquestion'd, in that thick resort:
Proffering for hire his service at the gate,
To drudge, draw water, and to run or wait.
So fair befell him, that for little gain
He serv'd at first Emilia's chamberlain;
And, watchful all advantages to spy,
Was still at hand, and in his master's eye;
And as his bones were big, and sinews strong,
Refus'd no toil that could to slaves belong;
But from deep wells with engines water drew,
And us'd his noble hands the wood to hew.
He pass d a year at least attending thus
On Emily, and call'd Philostratus.
But never was there man of his degree
So much esteem'd, so well belov'd as he.
So gentle of condition was he known,
That through the court his courtesy was blown:
All think him worthy of a greater place,
And recommend him to the royal grace;
That, exercis'd within a higher sphere,
His virtues more conspicuous might appear.
Thus by the general voice was Arcite prais'd,
And by great Theseus to high favour rais'd
Among his menial servants first enroll'd,
And largely entertain'd with sums of gold.
Besides what secretly from Thebes was sent,
Of his own income, and his annual rent:
This well employ'd, he purchas'd friends and fame,

But cautiously conceal'd from whence it came.
Thus for three years he liv'd with large increase,
In arms of honour, and esteem in peace;
To Theseus' person he was ever near:
And Theseus for his virtues held him dear.

PALAMON AND ARCITE;

OR, THE KNIGHT'S TALE

BOOK II.

While Arcite lives in bliss, the story turns
Where hopeless Palamon in prison mourns.
For six long years immur'd, the captive knight
Had dragg'd his chains, and scarcely seen the light:
Lost liberty and love at once he bore:
His prison pain'd him much, his passion more:
Nor dares he hope his fetters to remove,
Nor ever wishes to be free from love.
But when the sixth revolving year was run,
And May within the Twins receiv'd the sun,
Were it by chance, or forceful destiny,
Which forms in causes first whate'er shall be,

610 *And Theseus,* &c.] Palamon and Arcyte, a comedy, was acted before Queen Elizabeth, in Christ Church Hall at Oxford, 1566, with which the queen appeared to be much delighted, and promised to reward the author, Richard Edwards, for his pains. His poems are printed in The Paradise of Dainty Devices. London, quarto, 1578. *Dr. J. W.*

Assisted by a friend, one moonless night,
This Palamon from prison took his flight:
A pleasant beverage he prepar'd before
Of wine and honey mix'd with added store
Of opium; to his keeper this he brought,
Who swallow'd unaware the sleepy draught,
And snor'd secure till morn, his senses bound
In slumber, and in long oblivion drown'd.
Short was the night, and careful Palamon
Sought the next covert ere the rising sun.
A thick spread forest near the city lay,
To this with lengthen'd strides he took his way
(For far he could not fly, and fear'd the day).
Safe from pursuit, he meant to shun the light,
Till the brown shadows of the friendly night
To Thebes might favour his intended flight.
When to his country come, his next design
Was all the Theban race in arms to join,
And war on Theseus, till he lost his life,
Or won the beauteous Emily to wife.
Thus while his thoughts the lingering day beguile,
To gentle Arcite let us turn our style;
Who little dreamt how nigh he was to care,
Till treacherous fortune caught him in the snare.
The morning lark, the messenger of day,
Saluted in her song the morning gray;
And soon the sun arose with beams so bright,
That all the horizon laugh'd to see the joyous sight;
He with his tepid rays the rose renews,
And licks the drooping leaves, and dries the dews;

When Arcite left his bed, resolv'd to pay
Observance to the month of merry May:
Forth on his fiery steed betimes he rode,
That scarcely prints the turf on which he trod:
At ease he seem'd, and, prancing o'er the plains,
Turn'd only to the grove his horse's reins,
The grove I named before; and, lighting there,
A woodbine garland sought to crown his hair;
Then turn'd his face against the rising day,
And rais'd his voice to welcome in the May.

For thee, sweet month, the groves green liveries wear,
If not the first, the fairest of the year:
For thee the Graces lead the dancing hours,
And Nature's ready pencil paints the flowers:
When thy short reign is past, the feverish sun
The sultry tropic fears, and moves more slowly on.
So may thy tender blossoms fear no blight.
Nor goats with venom'd teeth thy tendrils bite,
As thou shalt guide my wand'ring feet to find
The fragrant greens I seek, my brows to bind.

His vows address'd, within the grove he stray'd,
Till fate, or fortune, near the place convey'd
His steps where secret Palamon was laid.
Full little thought of him the gentle knight,
Who, flying death, had there conceal'd his flight,
In brakes and brambles hid, and shunning mortal sight.
And less he knew him for his hated foe,
But fear'd him as a man he did not know.
But as it has been said of ancient years,

That fields are full of eyes, and woods have ears;
For this the wise are ever on their guard,
For, unforeseen, they say, is unprepar'd.
Uncautious Arcite thought himself alone,
And less than all suspected Palamon.
Who list'ning heard him, while he search'd the grove,
And loudly sung his roundelay of love:
But on the sudden stopp'd, and silent stood,
As lovers often muse, and change their mood;
Now high as heaven, and then as low as hell;
Now up, now down, as buckets in a well;
For Venus, like her day, will change her cheer,
And seldom shall we see a Friday clear.
Thus Arcite having sung, with alter'd hue
Sunk on the ground, and from his bosom drew
A desperate sigh, accusing heaven and fate,
And angry Juno's unrelenting hate.
Curs'd be the day when first I did appear;

682 *That fields are full of eyes, and woods have ears*] There is an old Monkish verse to this effect.

Campus habet lumen, et habet nemus auris acumen.
Tyrwhitt.

There is a Hebrew proverb much to the same purpose:

Do not speak of great matters in a field that is full of little hills.—*Ray's Proverbs.* *J. W.*

699 *Curs'd be the day when first I did appear;*
Let it be blotted from the calendar,
Lest it pollute the month, and poison all the year]

'Let the day perish wherein I was born, and let it not be joined unto the days of the year. Let it not come into the number of the months. Let them curse it that curse the day.'—Job, iii. 3. et seq. *J. W.*

Let it be blotted from the calendar,
Lest it pollute the month, and poison all the year.
Still will the jealous Queen pursue our race?
Cadmus is dead, the Theban city was:
Yet ceases not her hate: for all who come
From Cadmus are involv'd in Cadmus' doom.
I suffer for my blood: unjust decree!
That punishes another's crime on me.
In mean estate I serve my mortal foe,
The man who caus'd my country's overthrow.
This is not all; for Juno, to my shame,
Has forc'd me to forsake my former name;
Arcite I was, Philostratus I am.
That side of heaven is all my enemy:
Mars ruin'd Thebes: his mother ruin'd me.
Of all the royal race remains but one
Besides myself, the unhappy Palamon,
Whom Theseus holds in bonds, and will not free;
Without a crime, except his kin to me.
Yet these, and all the rest, I could endure;
But love's a malady without a cure;
Fierce Love has pierc'd me with his fiery dart,
He fries within, and hisses at my heart.
Your eyes, fair Emily, my fate pursue;
I suffer for the rest, I die for you.
Of such a goddess no time leaves record,

725 *Of such a goddess no time leaves record,*
Who burn'd the temple where she was ador'd]

This conceit is not in the original of Chaucer, but may be found in Dryden's Miscellanies, being the concluding couplet

Who burn'd the temple where she was ador'd:
And let it burn, I never will complain,
Pleas'd with my sufferings, if you knew my pain.
At this a sickly qualm his heart assail'd,
His ears ring inward, and his senses fail'd.
No word miss'd Palamon of all he spoke,
But soon to deadly pale he chang'd his look:
He trembled every limb, and felt a smart,
As if cold steel had glided through his heart;
Nor longer staid, but starting from his place,
Discover'd stood, and show'd his hostile face:
False traitor Arcite, traitor to thy blood,
Bound by thy sacred oath to seek my good,
Now art thou found forsworn, for Emily;
And dar'st attempt her love, for whom I die.
So hast thou cheated Theseus with a wile,
Against thy vow, returning to beguile
Under a borrow'd name: as false to me,
So false thou art to him who set thee free:
But rest assur'd, that either thou shalt die,
Or else renounce thy claim in Emily;
For though unarm'd I am, and (freed by chance)
Am here without my sword, or pointed lance:
Hope not, base man, unquestion'd hence to go,
For I am Palamon, thy mortal foe.
Arcite, who heard his tale, and knew the man,
His sword unsheath'd, and fiercely thus began:

of a copy of verses, called, A Cruel Mistress, by T. Carew, Esq. What could induce our poet to insert them here, we cannot readily conceive. *J. W.*

Now, by the gods, who govern heaven above,
Wert thou not weak with hunger, mad with love,
That word had been thy last, or in this grove
This hand should force thee to renounce thy love.
The surety which I gave thee, I defy:
Fool, not to know that love endures no tie
And Jove but laughs at lovers' perjury.
Know I will serve the fair in thy despite;
But since thou art my kinsman, and a knight,
Here, have my faith, to-morrow in this grove
Our arms shall plead the titles of our love:
And Heaven so help my right, as I alone
Will come, and keep the cause and quarrel both unknown,
With arms of proof both for myself and thee;
Choose thou the best, and leave the worst to me.
And, that at better ease thou may'st abide,
Bedding and clothes I will this night provide,
And needful sustenance, that thou mayst be
A conquest better won, and worthy me.
His promise Palamon accepts; but pray'd,
To keep it better than the first he made
Thus fair they parted till the morrow's dawn,
For each had laid his plighted faith to pawn.
Oh Love! thou sternly dost thy power maintain,
And wilt not bear a rival in thy reign,
Tyrants and thou all fellowship disdain.
This was in Arcite prov'd, and Palamon
Both in despair, yet each would love alone.
Arcite return'd, and, as in honour tied,

His foe with bedding and with food supplied;
Then, ere the day, two suits of armour sought,
Which borne before him on his steed he brought.
Both were of shining steel, and wrought so pure,
As might the strokes of two such arms endure.
Now, at the time, and in the appointed place,
The challenger and challeng'd, face to face,
Approach; each other from afar they knew,
And from afar their hatred chang'd their hue.
So stands the Thracian herdsman with his spear,
Full in the gap, and hopes the hunted bear,
And hears him rustling in the wood, and sees
His course at distance by the bending trees:
And thinks, Here comes my mortal enemy,
And either he must fall in fight, or I:
This while he thinks, he lifts aloft his dart;
A generous chilness seizes every part:
The veins pour back the blood, and fortify the heart.
Thus pale they meet; their eyes with fury burn;
None greets; for none the greeting will return:
But in dumb surliness, each arm'd with care
His foe profest, as brother of the war:
Then both, no moment lost, at once advance
Against each other, arm'd with sword and lance:
They lash, they foin, they pass, they strive to bore
Their corslets, and the thinnest parts explore.
Thus two long hours in equal arms they stood,
And, wounded, wound; till both were bath'd in blood;
And not a foot of ground had either got,
As if the world depended on the spot.

Fell Arcite like an angry tiger far'd,
And like a lion Palamon appear'd :
Or, as two boars, whom love to battle draws,
With rising bristles, and with frothy jaws,
Their adverse breasts with tusks oblique they wound ;
With grunts and groans the forest rings around.
So fought the knights, and fighting must abide,
Till fate an umpire sends their difference to decide.
The power that ministers to God's decrees,
And executes on earth what heaven foresees,
Call'd Providence, or Chance, or Fatal Sway,
Comes with resistless force, and finds or makes her way.
Nor kings, nor nations, nor united power,
One moment can retard the appointed hour,
And some one day, some wondrous chance appears,
Which happen'd not in centuries of years :
For sure, whate'er we mortals hate, or love,
Or hope, or fear, depends on powers above ;
They move our appetites to good or ill,
And by foresight necessitate the will.
In Theseus this appears ; whose youthful joy
Was beasts of chase in forests to destroy,
This gentle knight, inspir'd by jolly May,
Forsook his easy couch at early day,
And to the wood and wilds pursued his way.
Beside him rode Hippolita the queen,
And Emily attir'd in lively green,
With horns, and hounds, and all the tuneful cry,
To hunt a royal hart within the covert nigh :

And as he follow'd Mars before, so now
He serves the goddess of the silver bow.
The way that Theseus took was to the wood
Where the two knights in cruel battle stood:
The lawnd on which they fought, the appointed place
In which the uncoupled hounds began the chase.
Thither forth-right he rode to rouse the prey,
That shaded by the fern in harbour lay;
And thence dislodg'd, was wont to leave the wood,
For open fields, and cross the crystal flood.
Approach'd, and looking underneath the sun,
He saw proud Arcite and fierce Palamon,
In mortal battle doubling blow on blow,
Like lightning flam'd their falchions to and fro,
And shot a dreadful gleam; so strong they strook,
There seem'd less force requir'd to fell an oak:
He gaz'd with wonder on their equal might,
Look'd eager on, but knew not either knight:
Resolv'd to learn, he spurr'd his fiery steed
With goring rowels to provoke his speed.
The minute ended that began the race,
So soon he was betwixt 'em on the place;
And with his sword unsheath'd, on pain of life
Commands both combatants to cease their strife:
Then with imperious tone pursues his threat;
What are you? why in arms together met?
How dares your pride presume against my laws,
As in a listed field to fight your cause?
Unask'd the royal grant; no marshal by,
As knightly rites require; nor judge to try?

Then Palamon, with scarce recover'd breath,
Thus hasty spoke: We both deserve the death,
And both would die; for look the world around,
A pair so wretched is not to be found,
Our life's a load; encumber'd with the charge,
We long to set the imprison'd soul at large.
Now, as thou art a sovereign judge, decree
The rightful doom of death to him and me,
Let neither find thy grace; for grace is cruelty.
Me first, O kill me first; and cure my woe:
Then sheath the sword of justice on my foe:
Or kill him first; for when his name is heard,
He foremost will receive his due reward.
Arcite of Thebes is he; thy mortal foe:
On whom thy grace did liberty bestow,
But first contracted, that if ever found
By day or night upon the Athenian ground,
His head should pay the forfeit; see return'd
The perjur'd knight, his oath and honour scorn'd.
For this is he, who, with a borrow'd name,
And proffer'd service, to thy palace came,
Now call'd Philostratus: retain'd by thee,
A traitor trusted, and in high degree,
Aspiring to the bed of beauteous Emily.
My part remains; from Thebes my birth I own,
And call myself the unhappy Palamon.
Think me not like that man; since no disgrace
Can force me to renounce the honour of my race.
Know me for what I am: I broke thy chain,
Nor promis'd I thy prisoner to remain:

The love of liberty with life is given,
And life itself the inferior gift of Heaven.
Thus without crime I fled; but farther know,
I, with this Arcite, am thy mortal foe:
Then give me death, since I thy life pursue;
For safeguard of thyself, death is my due.
More wouldst thou know? I love bright Emily,
And, for her sake, and in her sight, will die:
But kill my rival too; for he no less
Deserves; and I thy righteous doom will bless,
Assur'd that what I lose, he never shall possess.
To this replied the stern Athenian prince,
And sourly smil'd, In owning your offence
You judge yourself; and I but keep record
In place of law, while you pronounce the word.
Take your desert, the death you have decreed;
I seal your doom, and ratify the deed:
By Mars, the patron of my arms, you die.
He said; dumb sorrow seiz'd the standers-by.
The queen above the rest, by nature good,
(The pattern form'd of perfect womanhood)
For tender pity wept: when she began,
Through the bright quire the infectious virtue ran.
All dropt their tears, e'en the contended maid:
And thus among themselves they softly said:
What eyes can suffer this unworthy sight!
Two youths of royal blood, renown'd in fight,
The mastership of heaven in face and mind,
And lovers, far beyond their faithless kind: [came
See their wide-streaming wounds: they neither

For pride of empire, nor desire of fame:
Kings fight for kingdoms, madmen for applause:
But love for love alone; that crowns the lover's cause.
This thought, which ever bribes the beauteous kind,
Such pity wrought in every lady's mind,
They left their steeds, and prostrate on the place,
From the fierce king implor'd the offenders' grace.
He paus'd a while, stood silent in his mood,
(For yet his rage was boiling in his blood;)
But soon his tender mind the impression felt,
(As softest metals are not slow to melt,
And pity soonest runs in softest minds:)
Then reasons with himself; and first he finds
His passion cast a mist before his sense,
And either made, or magnified the offence.
Offence! of what? to whom? who judg'd the cause?
The prisoner freed himself by nature's laws:
Born free, he sought his right: the man he freed
Was perjur'd, but his love excus'd the deed:
Thus pondering, he look'd under with his eyes,
And saw the women's tears, and heard their cries;
Which mov'd compassion more, he shook his head,
And softly sighing to himself he said:
Curse on the unpardoning prince, whom tears can draw
To no remorse; who rules by lions' law;
And deaf to prayers, by no submission bow'd,
Rends all alike; the penitent and proud!
At this, with look serene, he rais'd his head;

Reason resum'd her place, and passion fled:
Then thus aloud he spoke: The power of love,
In earth, and seas, and air, and heaven above,
Rules, unresisted, with an awful nod;
By daily miracles declar'd a god:
He blinds the wise, gives eyesight to the blind;
And moulds and stamps anew the lover's mind.
Behold that Arcite, and this Palamon,
Freed from my fetters, and in safety gone,
What hinder'd either in their native soil
At ease to reap the harvest of their toil?
But Love, their lord, did otherwise ordain,
And brought 'em in their own despite again,
To suffer death deserv'd; for well they know,
'Tis in my power, and I their deadly foe.
The proverb holds, that to be wise and love,
Is hardly granted to the gods above.
See how the madmen bleed: behold the gains
With which their master, Love, rewards their pains.
For seven long years, on duty every day,
Lo their obedience, and their monarch's pay:
Yet, as in duty bound, they serve him on;
And, ask the fools, they think it wisely done;
Nor ease, nor wealth, nor life itself, regard,
For 'tis their maxim, Love is love's reward.
This is not all; the fair, for whom they strove,
Nor knew before, nor could suspect their love,
Nor thought, when she beheld the fight from far,
Her beauty was the occasion of the war.
But sure a general doom on man is past,

And all are fools and lovers, first or last:
This, both by others and myself, I know,
For I have serv'd their sovereign long ago;
Oft have been caught within the winding train
Of female snares, and felt the lover's pain,
And learn'd how far the god can human hearts
constrain.
To this remembrance, and the prayers of those,
Who for the offending warriors interpose,
I give their forfeit lives; on this accord,
To do me homage as their sovereign lord;
And as my vassals, to their utmost might,
Assist my person, and assert my right.
This freely sworn, the knights their grace obtain'd.
Then thus the king his secret thoughts explain'd:
If wealth, or honour, or a royal race,
Or each, or all, may win a lady's grace,
Then either of you knights may well deserve
A princess born; and such is she you serve:
For Emily is sister to the crown,
And but too well to both her beauty known:
But should you combat till you both were dead,
Two lovers cannot share a single bed:
As therefore both are equal in degree,
The lot of both be left to destiny.
Now hear the award, and happy may it prove
To her, and him who best deserves her love.
Depart from hence in peace, and, free as air,
Search the wide world, and where you please repair;
But on the day when this returning sun

To the same point through every sign has run,
Then each of you his hundred knights shall bring,
In royal lists, to fight before the king;
And then the knight, whom fate or happy chance
Shall with his friends to victory advance,
And grace his arms so far in equal fight,
From out the bars to force his opposite,
Or kill, or make him recreant on the plain,
The prize of valour and of love shall gain;
The vanquish'd party shall their claim release,
And the long jars conclude in lasting peace.
The charge be mine to adorn the chosen ground,
The theatre of war, for champions so renown'd:
And take the patron's place of either knight,
With eyes impartial to behold the fight;
And Heaven of me so judge as I shall judge aright.
If both are satisfied with this accord,
Swear by the laws of knighthood on my sword.
  Who now but Palamon exults with joy?
And ravish'd Arcite seems to touch the sky:
The whole assembled troop was pleas'd as well,
Extol the award, and on their knees they fell
To bless the gracious king. The knights with leave
Departing from the place, his last commands re-
On Emily with equal ardour look, [ceive;
And from her eyes their inspiration took.
From thence to Thebes' old walls pursue their way,
Each to provide his champions for the day.
  It might be deem'd, on our historian's part,
Or too much negligence, or want of art,

If he forgot the vast magnificence
Of royal Theseus, and his large expense.
He first inclos'd for lists a level ground,
The whole circumference a mile around;
The form was circular; and all without
A trench was sunk, to moat the place about.
Within an amphitheatre appear'd,
Rais'd in degrees; to sixty paces rear'd:
That when a man was plac'd in one degree,
Height was allow'd for him above to see.
  Eastward was built a gate of marble white;
The like adorn'd the western opposite
A nobler object than this fabric was,
Rome never saw; nor of so vast a space.
For rich with spoils of many a conquer'd land,
All arts and artists Theseus could command;
Who sold for hire, or wrought for better fame;
The master painters, and the carvers, came.
So rose within the compass of the year
An age's work, a glorious theatre.
Then o'er its eastern gate was rais'd above
A temple, sacred to the Queen of Love;
An altar stood below: on either hand
A priest with roses crown'd, who held a myrtle wand.
  The dome of Mars was on the gate oppos'd,
And on the north a turret was inclos'd,
Within the wall of alabaster white,
And crimson coral for the queen of night,
Who takes in sylvan sports her chaste delight.
  Within these oratories might you see

Rich carvings, portraitures, and imagery:
Where every figure to the life express'd
The godhead's power to whom it was address'd.
In Venus' temple on the sides were seen
The broken slumbers of enamour'd men,
Prayers that e'en spoke, and pity seem'd to call,
And issuing sighs that smok'd along the wall.
Complaints, and hot desires, the lover's hell,
And scalding tears that wore a channel where they fell:
And all around were nuptial bonds, the ties
Of love's assurance, and a train of lies,
That, made in lust, conclude in perjuries.
Beauty, and Youth, and Wealth, and Luxury,
And spritely Hope, and short-enduring Joy;
And Sorceries to raise the infernal powers,
And Sigils fram'd in planetary hours:
Expense, and after-thought, and idle Care,
And Doubts of motley hue, and dark Despair;
Suspicions, and fantastical Surmise,
And Jealousy suffus'd, with jaundice in her eyes,
Discolouring all she view'd, in tawny dress'd,
Down-look'd, and with a cuckoo on her fist.
Oppos'd to her, on t' other side advance
The costly feast, the carol, and the dance,
Minstrels, and music, poetry, and play,
And balls by night, and tournaments by day.
All these were painted on the wall, and more;
With acts and monuments of times before:
And others added by prophetic doom,
And lovers yet unborn, and loves to come:

For there the Idalian mount, and Citheron,
The court of Venus, was in colours drawn:
Before the palace-gate, in careless dress,
And loose array, sat portress Idleness:
There, by the fount, Narcissus pin'd alone;
There Samson was; with wiser Solomon,
And all the mighty names by love undone.
Medea's charms were there, Circean feasts,
With bowls that turn'd enamour'd youths to beasts:
Here might be seen that beauty, wealth, and wit,
And prowess, to the power of love submit:
The spreading snare for all mankind is laid;
And lovers all betray, and are betray'd.
The goddess' self some noble hand had wrought;
Smiling she seem'd, and full of pleasing thought:
From ocean as she first began to rise,
And smooth'd the ruffled seas, and clear'd the skies;
She trod the brine all bare below the breast,
And the green waves but ill conceal'd the rest.
A lute she held; and on her head was seen
A wreath of roses red, and myrtles green;
Her turtles fann'd the buxom air above;
And, by his mother, stood an infant Love,
With wings unfledg'd; his eyes were banded o'er;
His hands a bow, his back a quiver bore,

1114 *And all the mighty names*, &c.] Our poet omits in his haste several of the most apposite examples. As for instance, Chaucer says,

Ne yet the grete strength of Hercules,
Ne of Turnus the hardy fiers corage,
The riche Cresus, caitif in servage.

For Hercules he has substituted Samson. *I. W.*

Supplied with arrows bright and keen, a deadly store.
But in the dome of mighty Mars the red
With different figures all the sides were spread;
This temple, less in form, with equal grace,
Was imitative of the first in Thrace:
For that cold region was the lov'd abode,
And sovereign mansion of the warrior god.
The landscape was a forest wide and bare;
Where neither beast, nor humankind repair;
The fowl, that scent afar, the borders fly,
And shun the bitter blast, and wheel about the sky.
A cake of scurf lies baking on the ground,
And prickly stubs, instead of trees, are found;
Or woods with knots and knares deform'd and old;
Headless the most, and hideous to behold:
A rattling tempest through the branches went,
That stripp'd 'em bare, and one sole way they bent.
Heaven froze above, severe, the clouds congeal,
And through the crystal vault appear'd the standing hail.
Such was the face without: a mountain stood
Threat'ning from high, and overlook'd the wood:
Beneath the low'ring brow, and on a bent,
The temple stood of Mars armipotent:
The frame of burnish'd steel, that cast a glare
From far, and seem'd to thaw the freezing air.
A straight long entry to the temple led,
Blind with high walls, and horror over head:
Thence issued such a blast, and hollow roar,
As threaten'd from the hinge to heave the door;

In through that door, a northern light there shone;
'Twas all it had, for windows there were none.
The gate was adamant; eternal frame! [came,
Which, hew'd by Mars himself, from Indian quarries
The labour of a god; and all along
Tough iron plates were clench'd to make it strong.
A tun about was every pillar there;
A polish'd mirror shone not half so clear.
There saw I how the secret felon wrought,
And treason labouring in the traitor's thought,
And midwife Time the ripen'd plot to murder brought.
There the red Anger dar'd the pallid Fear;
Next stood Hypocrisy, with holy leer;
Soft smiling, and demurely looking down,
But hid the dagger underneath the gown:
The assassinating wife, the household fiend;
And far the blackest there, the traitor-friend.
On t'other side there stood Destruction bare;
Unpunish'd Rapine, and a waste of war.
Contest, with sharpen'd knives, in cloisters drawn,
And all with blood bespread the holy lawn.
Loud menaces were heard, and foul disgrace
And bawling infamy, in language base; [place.
Till sense was lost in sound, and silence fled the
The slayer of himself yet saw I there,
The gore congeal'd was clotted in his hair:
With eyes half clos'd, and gaping mouth he lay,
And grim, as when he breath'd his sullen soul away.
In midst of all the dome Misfortune sat,

And gloomy Discontent, and fell Debate,
And Madness laughing in his ireful mood;
And arm'd complaint on theft; and cries of blood.
There was the murder'd corpse, in covert laid,
And violent death in thousand shapes display'd:
The city to the soldier's rage resign'd:
Successless wars, and poverty behind:
Ships burnt in fight, or forc'd on rocky shores,
And the rash hunter strangled by the boars:
The new-born babe by nurses overlaid;
And the cook caught within the raging fire he made.
All ills of Mars his nature, flame, and steel;
The gasping charioteer, beneath the wheel
Of his own car; the ruin'd house that falls
And intercepts her lord betwixt the walls;
The whole division that to Mars pertains,
All trades of death that deal in steel for gains,
Were there: the butcher, armourer, and smith
Who forges sharpen'd falchions, or the scythe.
The scarlet conquest on a tower was plac'd,
With shouts, and soldiers' acclamations grac'd;
A pointed sword hung threat'ning o'er his head,
Sustain'd but by a slender twine of thread.
There saw I Mars his ides, the Capitol,
The seer in vain foretelling Cæsar's fall;
The last triumvirs, and the wars they move,
And Antony, who lost the world for love.
These, and a thousand more, the fane adorn;
Their fates were painted ere the men were born,
All copied from the heavens, and ruling force
Of the red star, in his revolving course.

The form of Mars high on a chariot stood,
All sheath'd in arms, and gruffly look'd the god:
Two geomantic figures were display'd
Above his head, a warrior and a maid,*
One when direct, and one when retrograde.
Tired with deformities of death, I haste
To the third temple of Diana chaste.
A sylvan scene with various greens was drawn,
Shades on the sides, and in the midst a lawn:
The silver Cynthia, with her nymphs around,
Pursu'd the flying deer, the woods with horns resound:
Calisto there stood manifest of shame,
And, turn'd a bear, the northern star became:
Her son was next, and by peculiar grace,
In the cold circle held the second place:
The stag Acteon in the stream had spied
The naked huntress, and, for seeing, died:
His hounds, unknowing of his change, pursue
The chase, and their mistaken master slew.
Peneian Daphne too was there to see,
Apollo's love before, and now his tree:
The adjoining fane the assembled Greeks express'd,
And hunting of the Caledonian beast.
Oenides' valour, and his envied prize:
The fatal power of Atalanta's eyes;

* Rubens and Puella. *Orig. ed.*

1226 *One when direct, and one when retrograde*] Our author has here omitted one of the most lively images.

A wolfe ther stode before him at his feet,
With eyen red, and of a man he ete. *J. W.*

Diana's vengeance on the victor shown,
The murdress mother; and consuming son;
The Volscian queen extended on the plain;
The treason punish'd, and the traitor slain.
The rest were various huntings, well design'd,
And savage beasts destroy'd, of every kind.
The graceful goddess was array'd in green;
About her feet were little beagles seen,
That watch'd with upward eyes the motions of their queen.
Her legs were buskin'd, and the left before
In act to shoot; a silver bow she bore,
And at her back a painted quiver wore.
She trod a wexing moon, that soon would wane,
And, drinking borrow'd light, be fill'd again:
With downcast eyes, as seeming to survey
The dark dominions, her alternate sway.
Before her stood a woman in her throes,
And call'd Lucina's aid her burden to disclose.
All these the painter drew with such command,
That nature snatch'd the pencil from his hand,
Asham'd and angry that his art could feign
And mend the tortures of a mother's pain.
Theseus beheld the fanes of every god,
And thought his mighty cost was well bestow'd.
So princes now their poets should regard;
But few can write, and fewer can reward.
  The theatre thus rais'd, the lists enclos'd,
And all with vast magnificence dispos'd,
We leave the monarch pleas'd, and haste to bring
The knights to combat, and their arms to sing.

PALAMON AND ARCITE;

OR, THE KNIGHT'S TALE.

BOOK III.

The day approach'd when Fortune should decide
The important enterprize, and give the bride;
For now, the rivals round the world had sought,
And each his number, well appointed, brought.
The nations, far and near, contend in choice,
And send the flower of war by public voice;
That after, or before, were never known
Such chiefs, as each an army seem'd alone:
Beside the champions, all of high degree,
Who knighthood lov'd, and deeds of chivalry,
Throng'd to the lists, and envied to behold
The names of others, not their own, enroll'd.
Nor seems it strange; for every noble knight
Who loves the fair, and is endu'd with might,
In such a quarrel would be proud to fight.
There breathes not scarce a man on British ground
(An isle for love, and arms, of old renown'd)
But would have sold his life to purchase fame,
To Palamon or Arcite sent his name;
And had the land selected of the best,
Half had come hence, and let the world provide the rest.
A hundred knights with Palamon there came,
Approv'd in fight, and men of mighty name;

Their arms were several, as their nations were,
But furnish'd all alike with sword and spear,
Some wore coat-armour, imitating scale;
And next their skins were stubborn shirts of mail.
Some wore a breastplate and a light juppon,
Their horses cloth'd with rich caparison:
Some for defence would leathern bucklers use,
Of folded hides; and others shields of Pruce.
One hung a poleaxe at his saddle bow,
And one a heavy mace to shun the foe;
One for his legs and knees provided well,
With jambeux arm'd, and double plates of steel:
This on his helmet wore a lady's glove,
And that a sleeve embroider'd by his love.
With Palamon above the rest in place,
Lycurgus came, the surly king of Thrace;
Black was his beard, and manly was his face;
The balls of his broad eyes roll'd in his head,
And glar'd betwixt a yellow and a red:
He look'd a lion with a gloomy stare,
And o'er his eyebrows hung his matted hair:
Big-bon'd, and large of limbs, with sinews strong,
Broad-shoulder'd, and his arms were round and long.
Four milk-white bulls (the Thracian use of old)
Were yok'd to draw his car of burnish'd gold.
Upright he stood, and bore aloft his shield,

1320 *And o'er his eyebrows hung his matted hair*]
A strange misconstruction of the original.
'With kemped heres on his browes stout.' *J. W.*

Conspicuous from afar, and overlook'd the field.
His surcoat was a bear-skin on his back;
His hair hung long behind, and glossy raven black.
His ample forehead bore a coronet
With sparkling diamonds and with rubies set:
Ten brace, and more, of greyhounds, snowy fair,
And tall as stags, ran loose, and cours'd around his chair,
A match for pards in flight, in grappling for the bear;
With golden muzzles all their mouths were bound,
And collars of the same their necks surround.
Thus through the fields Lycurgus took his way;
His hundred knights attend in pomp and proud array.
To match this monarch, with strong Arcite came
Emetrius, king of Inde, a mighty name,
On a bay courser, goodly to behold, [gold.
The trappings of his horse emboss'd with barbarous
Not Mars bestrode a steed with greater grace;
His surcoat o'er his arms was cloth of Thrace,
Adorn'd with pearls, all orient, round, and great;
His saddle was of gold, with emeralds set,
His shoulders large a mantle did attire,
With rubies thick, and sparkling as the fire:
His amber-colour'd locks in ringlets run,
With graceful negligence, and shone against the sun.
His nose was aquiline, his eyes were blue,
Ruddy his lips, and fresh and fair his hue:

1343 *His surcoat o'er his arms was cloth of Thrace*]
'His cote-armour was of a cloth of Tars.' *J. W.*

Some sprinkled freckles on his face were seen,
Whose dusk set off the whiteness of the skin:
His awful presence did the crowd surprise,
Nor durst the rash spectator meet his eyes:
Eyes that confess'd him born for kingly sway,
So fierce, they flash'd intolerable day.
His age in nature's youthful prime appear'd,
And just began to bloom his yellow beard.
Whene'er he spoke, his voice was heard around,
Loud as a trumpet, with a silver sound:
A laurel wreath'd his temples, fresh, and green;
And myrtle sprigs, the marks of love, were mix'd between.
Upon his fist he bore, for his delight,
An eagle well reclaim'd, and lily white.
His hundred knights attend him to the war,
All arm'd for battle; save their heads were bare.
Words and devices blaz'd on every shield,
And pleasing was the terror of the field.
For kings, and dukes, and barons, you might see,
Like sparkling stars, though different in degree,
All for the increase of arms, and love of chivalry.
Before the king tame leopards led the way,
And troops of lions innocently play.
So Bacchus through the conquer'd Indies rode,
And beasts in gambols frisk'd before their honest god.
In this array the war of either side

1375 *So Bacchus through the conquer'd Indies rode,*
And beasts in gambols frisk'd before their honest god]
A simile not to be found in the original. By the epithet

Through Athens pass'd with military pride.
At prime, they enter'd on the Sunday morn;
Rich tapestry spread the streets, and flowers the posts
The town was all a jubilee of feasts; [adorn.
So Theseus will'd, in honour of his guests:
Himself with open arms the kings embrac'd,
Then all the rest in their degrees were grac'd.
No harbinger was needful for the night,
For every house was proud to lodge a knight.

I pass the royal treat, nor must relate
The gifts bestow'd, nor how the champions sate:
Who first, who last, or how the knights address'd
Their vows, or who was fairest at the feast;
Whose voice, whose graceful dance did most sur-
Soft amorous sighs, and silent love of eyes. [prise;
The rivals call my Muse another way,
To sing their vigils for the ensuing day.

'Twas ebbing darkness, past the noon of night:
And Phosphor, on the confines of the light,
Promis'd the sun; ere day began to spring,
The tuneful lark already stretch'd her wing,
And flickering on her nest, made short essays to sing.

When wakeful Palamon, preventing day,
Took, to the royal lists, his early way,
To Venus at her fane, in her own house, to pray.
There, falling on his knees before her shrine,

honest, Dryden means to express the youthful grace of the god agreeably to the expression of Virgil:

Et quocunque Deus circum caput egit honestum.
Georg. lib. ii. *J. W*

He thus implor'd with prayers her power divine.
Creator Venus, genial power of love,
The bliss of men below, and gods above!
Beneath the sliding sun thou runn'st thy race,
Dost fairest shine, and best become thy place.
For thee the winds their eastern blasts forbear,
Thy month reveals the spring, and opens all the year.
Thee, goddess, thee the storms of winter fly,
Earth smiles with flowers renewing, laughs the sky,
And birds to lays of love their tuneful notes apply.
For thee the lion loaths the taste of blood,
And roaring hunts his female through the wood:
For thee the bulls rebellow through the groves,
And tempt the stream, and snuff their absent loves.
'Tis thine, whate'er is pleasant, good, or fair:
All nature is thy province, life thy care:
Thou madest the world, and dost the world repair.
Thou gladder of the mount of Cytheron,
Increase of Jove, companion of the sun;
If e'er Adonis touch'd thy tender heart,
Have pity, goddess, for thou know'st the smart.
Alas! I have not words to tell my grief;
To vent my sorrow would be some relief;
Light sufferings give us leisure to complain;
We groan, but cannot speak, in greater pain.
O, goddess, tell thyself what I would say,
Thou know'st it, and I feel too much to pray.
So grant my suit, as I enforce my might,
In love to be thy champion, and thy knight;

A servant to thy sex, a slave to thee,
A foe profess'd to barren chastity.
Nor ask I fame or honour of the field,
Nor choose I more to vanquish than to yield:
In my divine Emilia make me blest,
Let Fate, or partial Chance, dispose the rest:
Find thou the manner, and the means prepare;
Possession, more than conquest, is my care.
Mars is the warrior's god; in him it lies,
On whom he favours to confer the prize;
With smiling aspect you serenely move
In your fifth orb, and rule the realm of love.
The Fates but only spin the coarser clue,
The finest of the wool is left for you,
Spare me but one small portion of the twine,
And let the sisters cut below your line:
The rest among the rubbish may they sweep,
Or add it to the yarn of some old miser's heap.
But, if you this ambitious prayer deny,
(A wish, I grant, beyond mortality,)
Then let me sink beneath proud Arcite's arms,
And I once dead, let him possess her charms.
Thus ended he; then with observance due
The sacred incense on her altar threw:
The curling smoke mounts heavy from the fires;
At length it catches flame, and in a blaze expires;
At once the gracious goddess gave the sign,
Her statue shook, and trembled all the shrine:
Pleas'd Palamon the tardy omen took:
For, since the flames pursu'd the trailing smoke,

He knew his boon was granted; but the day
To distance driven, and joy adjourn'd with long
delay.
Now morn with rosy light had streak'd the sky,
Up rose the sun, and up rose Emily;
Address'd her early steps to Cynthia's fane,
In state attended by her maiden train,
Who bore the vests that holy rites require,
Incense, and odorous gums, and cover'd fire.
The plenteous horns with pleasant mead they crown,
Nor wanted ought besides in honour of the moon.
Now while the temple smok'd with hallow'd steam,
They wash the virgin in a living stream;
The secret ceremonies I conceal,
Uncouth, perhaps unlawful, to reveal:
But such they were as pagan use requir'd,
Perform'd by women when the men retir'd,
Whose eyes profane their chaste mysterious rites
Might turn to scandal, or obscene delights.
Well meaners think no harm; but for the rest,
Things sacred they pervert, and silence is the best.
Her shining hair, uncomb'd, was loosely spread,
A crown of mastless oak adorn'd her head:
When to the shrine approach'd, the spotless maid
Had kindling fires on either altar laid:
(The rites were such as were observ'd of old,
By Statius in his Theban story told.)
Then kneeling with her hands across her breast,

1478 *Perform'd by women*] Those of Bona Dea, at Rome, to which Clodius intruded. *Dr. J. W.*

Thus lowly she preferr'd her chaste request.
O goddess, haunter of the woodland green,
To whom both heaven and earth and seas are seen;
Queen of the nether skies, where half the year
Thy silver beams descend, and light the gloomy sphere;
Goddess of maids, and conscious of our hearts,
So keep me from the vengeance of thy darts
(Which Niobe's devoted issue felt,
When hissing through the skies the feather'd deaths [were dealt;)
As I desire to live a virgin life,
Nor know the name of mother or of wife.
Thy votress from my tender years I am,
And love, like thee, the woods and sylvan game.
Like death, thou know'st, I loath the nuptial state,
And man, the tyrant of our sex, I hate,
A lowly servant, but a lofty mate;
Where love is duty on the female side; [pride.
On theirs mere sensual gust, and sought with surly
Now by thy triple shape, as thou art seen
In heaven, earth, hell, and every where a queen,

1497 *Which Niobe's devoted issue felt*] He has substituted Niobe's issue for Actæon, without any visible reason. *J. W.*

1504 *And man, the tyrant of our sex, I hate,*
A lowly servant, but a lofty mate;
Where love is duty on the female side;
On theirs mere sensual gust, and sought with surly pride]

These four lines are not in the original, nor indeed are they in character with the speaker. He forgets the Horatian precept:

Reddere personæ scit convenientia cuique. *J. W.*

Grant this my first desire; let discord cease,
And make betwixt the rivals lasting peace:
Quench their hot fire, or far from me remove
The flame, and turn it on some other love;
Or, if my frowning stars have so decreed,
That one must be rejected, one succeed,
Make him my lord, within whose faithful breast
Is fix'd my image, and who loves me best.
But, oh! e'en that avert; I choose it not,
But take it as the least unhappy lot.
A maid I am, and of thy virgin train;
Oh, let me still that spotless name retain!
Frequent the forests, thy chaste will obey,
And only make the beasts of chase my prey!
The flames ascend on either altar clear,
While thus the blameless maid address'd her prayer.
When lo! the burning fire that shone so bright,
Flew off all sudden, with extinguish'd light,
And left one altar dark, a little space;
Which turn'd self-kindled, and renew'd the blaze;
That other victor-flame a moment stood,
Then fell, and lifeless left the extinguish'd wood;
For ever lost, the irrevocable light
Forsook the black'ning coals, and sunk to night:
At either end it whistled as it flew,
And as the brands were green, so dropp'd the dew;
Infected as it fell with sweat of sanguine hue.
The maid from that ill omen turn'd her eyes,
And with loud shrieks and clamours rent the skies,
Nor knew what signified the boding sign,

But found the powers displeas'd, and fear'd the
wrath divine.
Then shook the sacred shrine, and sudden light
Sprung through the vaulted roof, and made the
temple bright.
The power, behold! the power in glory shone,
By her bent bow, and her keen arrows known;
The rest, a huntress issuing from the wood,
Reclining on her cornel spear she stood.
Then gracious thus began: Dismiss thy fear,
And Heaven's unchang'd decrees attentive hear:
More powerful gods have torn thee from my side,
Unwilling to resign, and doom'd a bride:
The two contending knights are weigh'd above;
One Mars protects, and one the Queen of Love:
But which the man, is in the Thunderer's breast:
This he pronounc'd, 'tis he who loves thee best.
The fire that, once extinct, reviv'd again,
Foreshows the love allotted to remain:
Farewell! she said, and vanish'd from the place;
The sheaf of arrows shook, and rattled in the case.
Aghast at this, the royal virgin stood,
Disclaim'd, and now no more a sister of the wood:
But to the parting goddess thus she pray'd;
Propitious still be present to my aid,
Nor quite abandon your once favour'd maid.
Then sighing she return'd; but smil'd betwixt,
With hopes, and fears, and joys with sorrows mix'd.
The next returning planetary hour
Of Mars, who shar'd the heptarchy of power,

His steps bold Arcite to the temple bent,
To adore with pagan rites the power armipotent:
Then prostrate, low before his altar lay,
And rais'd his manly voice, and thus began to pray:
Strong god of arms, whose iron sceptre sways
The freezing North, and Hyperborean seas,
And Scythian colds, and Thracia's wintry coast,
Where stand thy steeds, and thou art honour'd most;
There most; but every where thy power is known,
The fortune of the fight is all thy own:
Terror is thine, and wild amazement, flung
From out thy chariot, withers e'en the strong:
And disarray and shameful rout ensue,
And force is added to the fainting crew.
Acknowledg'd as thou art, accept my prayer,
If ought I have achiev'd deserve thy care:
If to my utmost power with sword and shield
I dar'd the death, unknowing how to yield,
And falling in my rank, still kept the field:
Then let my arms prevail, by thee sustain'd,
That Emily by conquest may be gain'd.
Have pity on my pains; nor those unknown
To Mars, which, when a lover, were his own.
Venus, the public care of all above,
Thy stubborn heart has soften'd into love:
Now, by her blandishments and powerful charms,
When yielded she lay curling in thy arms,
E'en by thy shame, if shame it may be call'd,
When Vulcan had thee in his net enthrall'd;
(O envied ignominy, sweet disgrace,

When every god that saw thee wish'd thy place!)
By those dear pleasures, aid my arms in fight,
And make me conquer in my patron's right:
For I am young, a novice in the trade,
The fool of love, unpractis'd to persuade:
And want the soothing arts that catch the fair,
But, caught myself, lie struggling in the snare:
And she I love, or laughs at all my pain,
Or knows her worth too well; and pays me with [disdain.
For sure I am, unless I win in arms,
To stand excluded from Emilia's charms:
Nor can my strength avail, unless, by thee
Endu'd with force, I gain the victory:
Then for the fire which warm'd thy generous heart,
Pity thy subject's pains, and equal smart.
So be the morrow's sweat and labour mine,
The palm and honour of the conquest thine:
Then shall the war, and stern debate, and strife
Immortal, be the business of my life;
And in thy fane, the dusty spoils among, [hung:
High on the burnish'd roof, my banner shall be
Rank'd with my champions' bucklers, and below,
With arms revers'd, the achievements of my foe:
And while these limbs the vital spirit feeds,
While day to night, and night to day succeeds,
Thy smoking altar shall be fat with food
Of incense, and the grateful steam of blood;
Burnt-offerings morn and evening shall be thine;
And fires eternal in thy temple shine.
This bush of yellow beard, this length of hair,

Which from my birth inviolate I bear,
Guiltless of steel, and from the razor free,
Shall fall a plenteous crop, reserv'd for thee.
So may my arms with victory be blest,
I ask no more; let fate dispose the rest.
The champion ceas'd; there follow'd in the close
A hollow groan: a murmuring wind arose;
The rings of iron, that on the doors were hung,
Sent out a jarring sound, and harshly rung:
The bolted gates flew open at the blast,
The storm rush'd in, and Arcite stood aghast:
The flames were blown aside, yet shone they bright,
Fann'd by the wind, and gave a ruffled light.
Then from the ground a scent began to rise,
Sweet smelling as accepted sacrifice:
This omen pleas'd, and as the flames aspire
With odorous incense Arcite heaps the fire:
Nor wanted hymns to Mars, or heathen charms:
At length the nodding statue clash'd his arms,
And with a sullen sound and feeble cry,
Half sunk, and half pronounc'd the word of victory.
For this, with soul devout, he thank'd the god,
And, of success secure, return'd to his abode.
These vows thus granted, rais'd a strife above,
Betwixt the god of War, and Queen of Love.

1650 *And, of success secure, return'd to his abode*] Dryden has here omitted a simile, which, though short, is natural, and highly expressive of Arcite's condition.

"As fayn as foul is of the brighte sonne;" i. e. as much rejoic'd at his reverse of fortune, as a bird is at the return of sunshine after a storm. *J. W.*

She, granting first, had right of time to plead;
But he had granted too, nor would recede.
Jove was for Venus; but he fear'd his wife,
And seem'd unwilling to decide the strife;
Till Saturn from his leaden throne arose,
And found a way the difference to compose:
Though sparing of his grace, to mischief bent,
He seldom does a good with good intent.
Wayward, but wise; by long experience taught,
To please both parties, for ills ends, he sought:
For this advantage age from youth has won
As not to be outridden though outrun.
By fortune he has now to Venus trin'd,
And with stern Mars in Capricorn was join'd:
Of him disposing in his own abode,
He sooth'd the goddess, while he gull'd the god:
Cease, daughter, to complain, and stint the strife:
Thy Palamon shall have his promis'd wife:
And Mars, the lord of conquest, in the fight
With palm and laurel shall adorn his knight.
Wide is my course, nor turn I to my place,
Till length of time, and move with tardy pace.
Man feels me, when I press the ethereal plains,
My hand is heavy, and the wound remains.
Mine is the shipwreck, in a wat'ry sign;
And in an earthy, the dark dungeon mine.

1663 *For this advantage age from youth has won,*
As not to be outridden though outrun]

The original word is "outrede," i. e. "outwit, surpass in counsel. The sense of this word has been most ridiculously mistaken by Dryden." Tyrwhitt. *J. W.*

Cold shivering agues, melancholy care,
And bitter blasting winds, and poison'd air,
Are mine, and wilful death, resulting from despair.
The throttling quinsey 'tis my star appoints,
And rheumatisms ascend to rack the joints:
When churls rebel against their native prince,
I arm their hands, and furnish the pretence;
And housing in the lion's hateful sign,
Bought senates, and deserting troops are mine.
Mine is the privy poisoning; I command
Unkindly seasons, and ungrateful land.
By me king's palaces are push'd to ground,
And miners crush'd beneath their mines are found.
'Twas I slew Samson, when the pillar'd hall
Fell down, and crush'd the many with the fall.
My looking is the sire of pestilence,
That sweeps at once the people and the prince.
Now weep no more, but trust thy grandsire's art,
Mars shall be pleas'd, and thou perform thy part.
'Tis ill, though different your complexions are,
The family of heaven for men should war.
The expedient pleas'd, where neither lost his right;
Mars had the day, and Venus had the night.
The management they left to Chronos' care;
Now turn we to the effect, and sing the war.

In Athens all was pleasure, mirth, and play,
All proper to the spring, and sprightly May:
Which every soul inspir'd with such delight,

1701 *Mars had the day, and Venus had the night*] An epigrammatic turn not to be found in Chaucer. *J. W.*

'Twas jesting all the day, and love at night.
Heaven smil'd, and gladded was the heart of man;
And Venus had the world as when it first began.
At length in sleep their bodies they compose,
And dreamt the future fight, and early rose.

Now scarce the dawning day began to spring,
As at a signal given, the streets with clamours ring.
At once the crowd arose; confus'd and high,
E'en from the heaven was heard a shouting cry;
For Mars was early up, and rous'd the sky.
The gods came downward to behold the wars,
Sharpening their sights, and leaning from their stars.
The neighing of the generous horse was heard,
For battle by the busy groom prepar'd:
Rustling of harness, rattling of the shield,
Clattering of armour, furbish'd for the field.
Crowds to the castle mounted up the street,
Battering the pavement with their coursers' feet:
The greedy sight might there devour the gold
Of glittering arms, too dazzling to behold:
And polish'd steel, that cast the view aside,
And crested morions, with their plumy pride.
Knights, with a long retinue of their squires,
In gaudy liveries march, and quaint attires.
One lac'd the helm, another held the lance:
A third the shining buckler did advance.
The courser paw'd the ground with restless feet,
And snorting foam'd, and champ'd the golden bit.
The smiths and armourers on palfreys ride,
Files in their hands, and hammers at their side,

And nails for loosen'd spears, and thongs for shields
provide.
The yeomen guard the streets, in seemly bands;
And clowns come crowding on, with cudgels in
their hands.
The trumpets, next the gate, in order plac'd,
Attend the sign to sound the martial blast;
The palace-yard is fill'd with floating tides,
And the last comers bear the former to the sides.
The throng is in the midst; the common crew
Shut out, the hall admits the better few;
In knots they stand, or in a rank they walk,
Serious in aspect, earnest in their talk:
Factious, and favouring this or t'other side,
As their strong fancies or weak reason guide;
Their wagers back their wishes; numbers hold
With the fair freckled king, and beard of gold:
So vigorous are his eyes, such rays they cast,
So prominent his eagle's beak is plac'd.
But most their looks on the black monarch bend,
His rising muscles, and his brawn commend;
His double-biting axe, and beamy spear,
Each asking a gigantic force to rear.
All spoke as partial favour mov'd the mind;
And, safe themselves, at others cost divin'd.
Wak'd by the cries, the Athenian chief arose,
The knightly forms of combat to dispose;
And passing through the obsequious guards, he sate
Conspicuous on a throne, sublime in state;
There for the two contending knights he sent,

Arm'd cap-a-pie, with reverence low they bent
He smil'd on both, and with superior look
Alike their offer'd adoration took.
The people press on every side to see
Their awful prince, and hear his high decree.
Then signing to their heralds with his hand,
They gave his orders from their lofty stand.
Silence is thrice enjoin'd; then thus aloud
The king at arms bespeaks the knights and list'ning crowd.

Our sovereign lord has ponder'd in his mind
The means to spare the blood of gentle kind;
And of his grace, and inborn clemency,
He modifies his first severe decree!
The keener edge of battle to rebate,
The troops for honour fighting, not for hate.
He wills, not death should terminate their strife;
And wounds, if wounds ensue, be short of life:
But issues, ere the fight, his dread command,
That slings afar, and poniards hand to hand,
Be banish'd from the field; that none shall dare
With shorten'd sword to stab in closer war;
But in fair combat fight with manly strength,
Nor push with biting point, but strike at length.
The tourney is allow'd but one career,
Of the tough ash, with the sharp-grinded spear,
But knights unhors'd may rise from off the plain,
And fight on foot their honour to regain;
Nor, if at mischief taken, on the ground
Be slain, but prisoners to the pillar bound,

At either barrier plac'd; nor (captives made,)
Be freed, or arm'd anew the fight invade.
The chief of either side, bereft of life,
Or yielded to his foe, concludes the strife.
Thus dooms the lord: now valiant knights and young,
Fight each his fill with swords and maces long.
The herald ends: the vaulted firmament
With loud acclaims and vast applause is rent:
Heaven guard a prince so gracious and so good,
So just, and yet so provident of blood!
This was the general cry. The trumpets sound,
And warlike symphony is heard around.
The marching troops through Athens take their way,
The great earl-marshal orders their array.
The fair from high the passing pomp behold;
A rain of flowers is from the windows roll'd.
The casements are with golden tissue spread,
And horses' hoofs, for earth, on silken tapestry tread.
The king goes midmost, and the rivals ride
In equal rank, and close his either side.
Next after these, there rode the royal wife,
With Emily, the cause, and the reward of strife.
The following cavalcade, by three and three,
Proceed by titles marshall'd in degree.
Thus through the southern gate they take their way,
And at the list arriv'd ere prime of day.
There, parting from the king, the chiefs divide,
And wheeling east and west, before their many ride.
The Athenian monarch mounts his throne on high,

And after him the queen and Emily:
Next these, the kindred of the crown are grac'd
With nearer seats, and lords by ladies plac'd.
Scarce were they seated, when with clamours loud
In rush'd at once a rude promiscuous crowd:
The guards, and then each other overbear,
And in a moment throng the spacious theatre.
Now chang'd the jarring noise to whispers low,
As winds forsaking seas more softly blow;
When at the western gate, on which the car
Is plac'd aloft, that bears the god of war,
Proud Arcite, ent'ring arm'd before his train,
Stops at the barrier, and divides the plain.
Red was his banner, and display'd abroad
The bloody colours of his patron god.
  At that self moment enters Palamon
The gate of Venus, and the rising Sun;
Wav'd by the wanton winds, his banner flies,
All maiden white, and shares the people's eyes.
From east to west, look all the world around,
Two troops so match'd were never to be found;
Such bodies built for strength, of equal age,
In stature siz'd; so proud an equipage:
The nicest eye could no distinction make,
Where lay the advantage, or what side to take.
  Thus rang'd, the herald for the last proclaims
A silence, while they answer'd to their names:
For so the king decreed, to shun with care
The fraud of musters false, the common bane of war.
The tale was just, and then the gates were clos'd;

And chief to chief, and troop to troop oppos'd.
The heralds last retir'd, and loudly cried,
The fortune of the field be fairly tried.
At this, the challenger with fierce defy
His trumpet sounds; the challeng'd makes reply:
With clangor rings the field, resounds the vaulted [sky.
Their vizors clos'd, their lances in the rest,
Or at the helmet pointed, or the crest,
They vanish from the barrier, speed the race,
And spurring see decrease the middle space.
A cloud of smoke envelopes either host,
And all at once the combatants are lost:
Darkling they join adverse, and shock unseen,
Coursers with coursers justling, men with men;
As labouring in eclipse, a while they stay,
Till the next blast of wind restores the day.
They look anew; the beauteous form of fight
Is chang'd, and war appears a grisly sight.
Two troops in fair array one moment show'd,
The next, a field with fallen bodies strow'd:
Not half the number in their seats are found;
But men and steeds lie groveling on the ground.
The points of spears are stuck within the shield,
The steeds without their riders scour the field.
The knights, unhors'd, on foot renew the fight;
The glittering falchions cast a gleaming light:
Hauberks and helms are hew'd with many a wound,
Out spins the streaming blood and dyes the ground.
The mighty maces with such haste descend,
They break the bones, and make the solid armour bend.

This thrusts amid the throng with furious force;
Down goes, at once, the horseman and the horse:
That courser stumbles on the fallen steed,
And flound'ring throws the rider o'er his head.
One rolls along, a football to his foes;
One with a broken truncheon deals his blows.
This halting, this disabled with his wound,
In triumph led, is to the pillar bound,
Where by the king's award he must abide:
There goes a captive led on t'other side.
By fits they cease; and leaning on the lance,
Take breath a while, and to new fight advance.
Full oft the rivals met, and neither spar'd
His utmost force, and each forgot to ward.
The head of this was to the saddle bent,
That other backward to the crupper sent:
Both were by turns unhors'd; the jealous blows
Fall thick and heavy, when on foot they close.
So deep their falchions bite, that every stroke
Pierc'd to the quick; and equal wounds they gave and took.
Borne far asunder by the tides of men,
Like adamant and steel they meet again.
So when a tiger sucks the bullock's blood,
A famish'd lion issuing from the wood
Roars lordly fierce, and challenges the food.
Each claims possession, neither will obey,
But both their paws are fasten'd on the prey;
They bite, they tear; and while in vain they strive,
The swains come arm'd between, and both to distance drive.

At length, as fate foredoom'd, and all things tend
By course of time to their appointed end;
So when the sun to west was far declin'd,
And both afresh in mortal battle join'd,
The strong Emetrius came in Arcite's aid,
And Palamon with odds was overlaid:
For turning short, he struck with all his might
Full on the helmet of the unwary knight.
Deep was the wound; he stagger'd with the blow,
And turn'd him to his unexpected foe;
Whom with such force he struck, he fell'd him down,
And cleft the circle of his golden crown.
But Arcite's men, who now prevail'd in fight,
Twice ten at once surround the single knight:
O'erpower'd, at length, they force him to the ground,
Unyielded as he was, and to the pillar bound;
And king Lycurgus, while he fought in vain
His friend to free, was tumbled on the plain.
Who now laments but Palamon, compell'd
No more to try the fortune of the field!
And, worse than death, to view with hateful eyes
His rival's conquest, and renounce the prize!
The royal judge on his tribunal plac'd,
Who had beheld the fight from first to last,
Bade cease the war; pronouncing from on high,
Arcite of Thebes had won the beauteous Emily.
The sound of trumpets to the voice replied,
And round the royal lists the heralds cried,
Arcite of Thebes has won the beauteous bride.

The people rend the skies with vast applause;
All own the chief, when fortune owns the cause.
Arcite is own'd e'en by the gods above,
And conquering Mars insults the Queen of Love.
So laugh'd he, when the rightful Titan fail'd,
And Jove's usurping arms in heaven prevail'd.
Laugh'd all the powers who favour tyranny;
And all the standing army of the sky.
But Venus with dejected eyes appears,
And weeping on the lists distill'd her tears;
Her will refus'd, which grieves a woman most,
And, in her champion foil'd, the cause of Love is lost.
Till Saturn said, Fair daughter, now be still,
The blust'ring fool has satisfied his will;
His boon is given; his knight has gain'd the day,
But lost the prize, the arrears are yet to pay.
Thy hour is come, and mine the care shall be
To please thy knight, and set thy promise free.
Now while the heralds run the lists around,
And Arcite, Arcite, heaven and earth resound;
A miracle, (nor less it could be call'd)
Their joy with unexpected sorrow pall'd.
The victor knight had laid his helm aside,
Part for his ease, the greater part for pride:
Bare-headed, popularly low he bow'd,
And paid the salutations of the crowd.
Then spurring at full speed, ran endlong on
Where Theseus sate on his imperial throne;
Furious he drove, and upward cast his eye,
Where next the queen was plac'd his Emily;

Then passing, to the saddle bow he bent:
A sweet regard the gracious virgin lent;
(For women, to the brave an easy prey,
Still follow Fortune where she leads the way:)
Just then, from earth sprung out a flashing fire,
By Pluto sent, at Saturn's bad desire:
The startling steed was seiz'd with sudden fright,
And, bounding, o'er the pommel cast the knight:
Forward he flew, and pitching on his head,
He quiver'd with his feet, and lay for dead.
Black was his countenance in a little space,
For all the blood was gather'd in his face.
Help was at hand: they rear'd him from the ground,
And from his cumbrous arms his limbs unbound;
Then lanc'd a vein, and watch'd returning breath;
It came, but clogg'd with symptoms of his death.
The saddle-bow the noble parts had prest,
All bruis'd and mortified his manly breast.
Him still entranc'd, and in a litter laid,
They bore from field, and to his bed convey'd.
At length he wak'd, and with a feeble cry,
The word he first pronounc'd was Emily.
Mean time the king, though inwardly he mourn'd,
In pomp triumphant to the town return'd,
Attended by the chiefs, who fought the field;
(Now friendly mix'd, and in one troop compell'd.)
Compos'd his looks to counterfeited cheer,
And bade them not for Arcite's life to fear.
But that which gladded all the warrior train,
Though most were sorely wounded, none were slain.

The surgeons soon despoil'd 'em of their arms,
And some with salves they cure, and some with charms;
Foment the bruises, and the pains assuage,
And heal their inward hurts with sovereign draughts of sage.
The king in person visits all around,
Comforts the sick, congratulates the sound;
Honours the princely chiefs, rewards the rest,
And holds for thrice three days a royal feast.
None was disgrac'd; for falling is no shame;
And cowardice alone is loss of fame.
The vent'rous knight is from the saddle thrown;
But 'tis the fault of fortune, not his own,
If crowns and palms the conquering side adorn,
The victor under better stars was born:
The brave man seeks not popular applause,
Nor overpower'd with arms deserts his cause;
Unsham'd though foil'd, he does the best he can;
Force is of brutes, but honour is of man.
Thus Theseus smil'd on all with equal grace;
And each was set according to his place,
With ease were reconcil'd the differing parts,
For envy never dwells in noble hearts.
At length they took their leave, the time expir'd;
Well pleas'd, and to their several homes retir'd.
Meanwhile the health of Arcite still impairs;
From bad proceeds to worse, and mocks the leeches' cares;
Swoln is his breast; his inward pains increase,

All means are us'd, and all without success.
The clotted blood lies heavy on his heart,
Corrupts, and there remains in spite of art:
Nor breathing veins, nor cupping will prevail;
All outward remedies and inward fail:
The mould of nature's fabric is destroy'd,
Her vessels discompos'd, her virtue void:
The bellows of his lungs begins to swell:
All out of frame is every secret cell,
Nor can the good receive, nor bad expel.
Those breathing organs thus within opprest,
With venom soon distend the sinews of his breast.
Nought profits him to save abandon'd life,
Nor vomit's upward aid, nor downward laxative.
The midmost region batter'd and destroy'd,
When nature cannot work, the effect of art is void.
For physic can but mend our crazy state,
Patch an old building, not a new create.
Arcite is doom'd to die in all his pride,
Must leave his youth, and yield his beauteous bride,
Gain'd hardly, against right, and unenjoy'd.
When 'twas declar'd all hope of life was past,
Conscience (that of all physic works the last)
Caus'd him to send for Emily in haste.
With her, at his desire, came Palamon;
Then on his pillow rais'd, he thus begun.
No language can express the smallest part
Of what I feel, and suffer in my heart,
For you, whom best I love and value most;
But to your service I bequeath my ghost;

Which from this mortal body when untied,
Unseen, unheard, shall hover at your side;
Nor fright you waking, nor your sleep offend,
But wait officious, and your steps attend:
How I have lov'd, excuse my faltering tongue,
My spirits feeble, and my pains are strong:
This I may say, I only grieve to die,
Because I lose my charming Emily:
To die, when Heaven had put you in my power,
Fate could not choose a more malicious hour!
What greater curse could envious fortune give,
Than just to die, when I began to live!
Vain men, how vanishing a bliss we crave,
Now warm in love, now withering in the grave!
Never, O never more to see the sun!
Still dark, in a damp vault, and still alone!
This fate is common; but I lose my breath
Near bliss, and yet not bless'd before my death.
Farewell; but take me dying in your arms,
'Tis all I can enjoy of all your charms:
This hand I cannot but in death resign;
Ah! could I live! but while I live 'tis mine.
I feel my end approach, and thus embrac'd,
Am pleas'd to die; but hear me speak my last:
Ah! my sweet foe, for you, and you alone,
I broke my faith with injur'd Palamon.
But love the sense of right and wrong confounds,
Strong love and proud ambition have no bounds.
And much I doubt, should Heaven my life pro-
I should return to justify my wrong: [long,

For while my former flames remain within,
Repentance is but want of power to sin.
With mortal hatred I pursu'd his life,
Nor he, nor you, were guilty of the strife;
Nor I, but as I lov'd; yet all combin'd,
Your beauty, and my impotence of mind;
And his concurrent flame, that blew my fire;
For still our kindred souls had one desire.
He had a moment's right in point of time;
Had I seen first, then his had been the crime.
Fate made it mine, and justified his right;
Nor holds this earth a more deserving knight.
For virtue, valour, and for noble blood,
Truth, honour, all that is compriz'd in good;
So help me heaven, in all the world is none
So worthy to be lov'd as Palamon.
He loves you too, with such a holy fire,
As will not, cannot, but with life expire:
Our vow'd affections both have often tried,
Nor any love but yours could ours divide.
Then by my love's inviolable band,
By my long suffering, and my short command,
If e'er you plight your vows when I am gone,
Have pity on the faithful Palamon.

This was his last; for Death came on amain,
And exercis'd below his iron reign;
Then upward to the seat of life he goes:
Sense fled before him, what he touch'd he froze:
Yet could he not his closing eyes withdraw,
Though less and less of Emily he saw;

So, speechless, for a little space he lay; [away.
Then grasp'd the hand he held, and sigh'd his soul
But whither went his soul, let such relate
Who search the secrets of the future state:
Divines can say but what themselves believe;
Strong proofs they have, but not demonstrative:
For, were all plain, then all sides must agree,
And faith itself be lost in certainty.
To live uprightly then is sure the best,
To save ourselves, and not to damn the rest.
The soul of Arcite went where heathens go,
Who better live than we, though less they know.
In Palamon a manly grief appears;
Silent, he wept, asham'd to show his tears:
Emilia shriek'd but once, and then, oppress'd
With sorrow, sunk upon her lover's breast:
Till Theseus in his arms convey'd with care,
Far from so sad a sight, the swooning fair.
'Twere loss of time her sorrow to relate;
Ill bears the sex a youthful lover's fate,
When just approaching to the nuptial state.
But like a low-hung cloud, it rains so fast,
That all at once it falls, and cannot last,
The face of things is chang'd, and Athens now,
That laugh'd so late, becomes the scene of woe:
Matrons and maids, both sexes, every state,
With tears lament the knight's untimely fate.
Nor greater grief in falling Troy was seen
For Hector's death; but Hector was not then.
Old men with dust deform'd their hoary hair,

The women beat their breasts, their cheeks they tear.
Why wouldst thou go, with one consent they cry,
When thou hadst gold enough, and Emily.
Theseus himself, who should have cheer'd the [grief
Of others, wanted now the same relief;
Old Egeus only could revive his son,
Who various changes of the world had known,
And strange vicissitudes of human fate,
Still altering, never in a steady state;
Good after ill, and, after pain, delight;
Alternate like the scenes of day and night:
Since every man, who lives, is born to die,
And none can boast sincere felicity,
With equal mind, what happens, let us bear,
Nor joy, nor grieve, too much for things beyond our care.
Like pilgrims to the appointed place we tend;
The world's an inn, and death the journey's end.
E'en kings but play; and when their part is done,
Some other, worse or better, mount the throne.
With words like these the crowd was satisfied,
And so they would have been, had Theseus died.
But he, their king, was labouring in his mind,
A fitting place for funeral pomps to find,
Which were in honour of the dead design'd.
And after long debate, at last he found
(As love itself had mark'd the spot of ground)
That grove for ever green, that conscious lawnd,
Where he with Palamon fought hand to hand:

That where he fed his amorous desires
With soft complaints, and felt his hottest fires,
There other flames might waste his earthly part,
And burn his limbs, where love had burn'd his heart.

This once resolv'd, the peasants were enjoin'd
Sere-wood, and firs, and dodder'd oaks to find.
With sounding axes to the grove they go,
Fell, split, and lay the fuel on a row,
Vulcanian food: a bier is next prepar'd,
On which the lifeless body should be rear'd,
Cover'd with cloth of gold, on which was laid
The corpse of Arcite, in like robes array'd.
White gloves were on his hands, and on his head
A wreath of laurel, mix'd with myrtle, spread.
A sword keen-edg'd within his right he held,
The warlike emblem of the conquer'd field:
Bare was his manly visage on the bier:
Menac'd his countenance; e'en in death severe.
Then to the palace-hall they bore the knight,
To lie in solemn state, a public sight.
Groans, cries, and howlings fill the crowded place,
And unaffected sorrow sat on every face.
Sad Palamon above the rest appears,
In sable garments, dew'd with gushing tears:
His auburn locks on either shoulder flow'd,
Which to the funeral of his friend he vow'd:
But Emily, as chief, was next his side,
A virgin-widow, and a mourning bride.
And that the princely obsequies might be

Perform'd according to his high degree,
The steed that bore him living to the fight,
Was trapp'd with polish'd steel, all shining bright,
And cover'd with the achievements of the knight.
The riders rode abreast, and one his shield,
His lance of cornel-wood another held;
The third his bow, and, glorious to behold,
The costly quiver, all of burnish'd gold.
The noblest of the Grecians next appear,
And, weeping, on their shoulders bore the bier;
With sober pace they march'd, and often staid,
And through the master-street the corpse convey'd.
The houses to their tops with black were spread,
And e'en the pavements were with mourning hid.
The right side of the pall old Egeus kept,
And on the left the royal Theseus wept;
Each bore a golden bowl, of work divine,
With honey fill'd, and milk, and mix'd with ruddy [wine.

2206 I hope my reader will not think the assertion trifling, that Dryden here with his usual haste has rendered Chaucer unfaithfully.

> The steed that bore him living to the fight.

The original says,

> Duke Theseus let forth three stedes being
> That trapped were in stele all glittering,
> And cover'd with the arms of Dan Arcite,
> And eke upon these stedes, *gret and white*,
> Ther satten folk, &c.

Chaucer abounds in minute and circumstantial painting. The observation of Quintilian is undoubtedly just, when after giving an accurate and particular account of a besieged city, he says, 'Minus est tamen totum dicere quam omnia.' *J. W.*

Then Palamon, the kinsman of the slain,
And after him appear'd the illustrious train.
To grace the pomp, came Emily the bright,
With cover'd fire, the funeral pile to light.
With high devotion was the service made,
And all the rites of pagan honour paid:
So lofty was the pile, a Parthian bow,
With vigour drawn, must send the shaft below
The bottom was full twenty fathom broad,
With crackling straw beneath in due proportion
The fabric seem'd a wood of rising green, [strow'd.
With sulphur and bitumen cast between,
To feed the flames: the trees were unctuous fir,
And mountain-ash, the mother of the spear;
The mourner yew, and builder oak were there:
The beech, the swimming alder, and the plane,
Hard box, and linden of a softer grain, [ordain.
And laurels, which the gods for conquering chiefs
How they were rank'd, shall rest untold by me,
With nameless Nymphs that liv'd in ev'ry tree;
Nor how the Dryads, or the woodland train,
Disherited, ran howling o'er the plain:
Nor how the birds to foreign seats repair'd,
Or beasts, that bolted out, and saw the forest bar'd:
Nor how the ground, now clear'd, with ghastly fright
Beheld the sudden sun, a stranger to the light.
The straw, as first I said, was laid below:
Of chips and sere-wood was the second row;
The third of greens, and timber newly fell'd;

The fourth high stage the fragrant odours held,
And pearls, and precious stones, and rich array,
In midst of which, embalm'd, the body lay.
The service sung, the maid with mourning eyes
The stubble fir'd ; the smould'ring flames arise :
This office done, she sunk upon the ground ;
But what she spoke, recover'd from her swoon,
I want the wit in moving words to dress ;
But by themselves the tender sex may guess.
While the devouring fire was burning fast,
Rich jewels in the flame the wealthy cast ;
And some their shields, and some their lances threw,
And gave their warrior's ghost a warrior's due.
Full bowls of wine, of honey, milk, and blood
Were pour'd upon the pile of burning wood,
And hissing flames receive, and hungry lick the food.
Then thrice the mounted squadrons ride around
The fire, and Arcite's name they thrice resound :
Hail, and farewell, they shouted thrice amain,
Thrice facing to the left, and thrice they turn'd again :
Still as they turn'd, they beat their clattering shields ;
The women mix their cries ; and clamour fills the fields.
The warlike wakes continued all the night,
And funeral games were play'd at new returning light ;
Who naked wrestled best, besmear'd with oil,
Or who with gauntlets gave or took the foil,
I will not tell you, nor would you attend ;

But briefly haste to my long story's end.
I pass the rest; the year was fully mourn'd,
And Palamon long since to Thebes return'd:
When by the Grecians' general consent,
At Athens Theseus held his parliament:
Among the laws that pass'd it was decreed,
That conquer'd Thebes from bondage should be freed;
Reserving homage to the Athenian throne,
To which the sovereign summon'd Palamon.
Unknowing of the cause, he took his way,
Mournful in mind, and still in black array.
The monarch mounts the throne, and, plac'd on high,
Commands into the court the beauteous Emily:
So call'd, she came; the senate rose, and paid
Becoming reverence to the royal maid.
And first, soft whispers through the assembly went:
With silent wonder then they watch'd the event:
All hush'd, the king arose with awful grace,
Deep thought was in his breast, and counsel in his face.
At length he sigh'd; and having first prepar'd
The attentive audience, thus his will declar'd.
The Cause and Spring of motion, from above,
Hung down on earth the golden chain of Love:
Great was the effect, and high was his intent,
When peace among the jarring seeds he sent.
Fire, flood, and earth, and air by this were bound,
And Love, the common link, the new creation crown'd.

The chain still holds; for though the forms decay,
Eternal matter never wears away:
The same first mover certain bounds has plac'd,
How long those perishable forms shall last:
Nor can they last beyond the time assign'd
By that all-seeing, and all-making mind:
Shorten their hours they may; for will is free;
But never pass the appointed destiny.
So men oppress'd, when weary of their breath,
Throw off the burden, and suborn their death.
Then since those forms begin, and have their end,
On some unalter'd cause they sure depend:
Parts of the whole are we; but God the whole:
Who gives us life, and animating soul.
For nature cannot from a part derive
That being, which the whole can only give:
He perfect, stable; but imperfect we,
Subject to change, and different in degree;
Plants, beasts, and man; and as our organs are,
We more or less of his perfection share.
But by a long descent, the ethereal fire
Corrupts; and forms, the mortal part, expire:
As he withdraws his virtue, so they pass,
And the same matter makes another mass:
This law the Omniscient Power was pleas'd to give,
That every kind should by succession live:
That individuals die, his will ordains;
The propagated species still remains.
The monarch oak, the patriarch of the trees,
Shoots rising up, and spreads by slow degrees;

Three centuries he grows, and three he stays,
Supreme in state, and in three more decays;
So wears the paving pebble in the street,
And towns and towers their fatal periods meet:
So rivers, rapid once, now naked lie,
Forsaken of their springs; and leave their channels dry.
So man, at first a drop, dilates with heat,
Then, form'd, the little heart begins to beat;
Secret he feeds, unknowing in the cell;
At length, for hatching ripe, he breaks the shell,
And struggles into breath, and cries for aid;
Then, helpless, in his mother's lap is laid.
He creeps, he walks, and issuing into man,
Grudges their life, from whence his own began:
Reckless of laws, affects to rule alone,
Anxious to reign, and restless on the throne:
First vegetive, then feels, and reasons last;
Rich of three souls, and lives all three to waste.
Some thus; but thousands more in flower of age:
For few arrive to run the latter stage.
Sunk in the first, in battle some are slain,
And others whelm'd beneath the stormy main.
What makes all this, but Jupiter the king,
At whose command we perish, and we spring?
Then 'tis our best, since thus ordain'd to die,
To make a virtue of necessity.
Take what he gives, since to rebel is vain;
The bad grows better, which we well sustain;
And could we choose the time, and choose aright,

'Tis best to die, our honour at the height.
When we have done our ancestors no shame,
But serv'd our friends, and well secur'd our fame;
Then should we wish our happy life to close,
And leave no more for fortune to dispose:
So should we make our death a glad relief
From future shame, from sickness, and from grief:
Enjoying while we live the present hour,
And dying in our excellence and flower.
Then round our death-bed every friend should run,
And joyous of our conquest early won:
While the malicious world with envious tears
Should grudge our happy end, and wish it theirs.
Since then our Arcite is with honour dead,
Why should we mourn, that he so soon is freed,
Or call untimely, what the gods decreed?
With grief as just, a friend may be deplor'd,
From a foul prison to free air restor'd.
Ought he to thank his kinsman or his wife,
Could tears recall him into wretched life?
Their sorrow hurts themselves; on him is lost;
And worse than both, offends his happy ghost.
What then remains, but, after past annoy,
To take the good vicissitude of joy?
To thank the gracious gods for what they give,
Possess our souls, and while we live, to live?
Ordain we then two sorrows to combine,
And in one point the extremes of grief to join;
That thence resulting joy may be renew'd,
As jarring notes in harmony conclude.

Then I propose that Palamon shall be
In marriage join'd with beauteous Emily;
For which already I have gain'd the assent
Of my free people in full parliament.
Long love to her has borne the faithful knight,
And well deserv'd, had fortune done him right:
'Tis time to mend her fault; since Emily
By Arcite's death from former vows is free:
If you, fair sister, ratify the accord,
And take him for your husband and your lord,
'Tis no dishonour to confer your grace
On one descended from a royal race:
And were he less, yet years of service past
From grateful souls exact reward at last:
Pity is Heaven's and yours; nor can she find
A throne so soft as in a woman's mind.
He said; she blush'd; and as o'eraw'd by might,
Seem'd to give Theseus what she gave the knight.
Then turning to the Theban thus he said;
Small arguments are needful to persuade
Your temper to comply with my command;
And speaking thus, he gave Emilia's hand.
Smil'd Venus, to behold her own true knight
Obtain the conquest, though he lost the fight;
And bless'd with nuptial bliss the sweet laborious night.
Eros, and Anteros, on either side,
One fir'd the bridegroom, and one warm'd the bride;
And long-attending Hymen from above,
Shower'd on the bed the whole Idalian grove.
All of a tenor was their after-life,

No day discolour'd with domestic strife;
No jealousy, but mutual truth believ'd,
Secure repose, and kindness undeceiv'd.
Thus Heaven, beyond the compass of his thought,
Sent him the blessing he so dearly bought.
So may the queen of love long duty bless,
And all true lovers find the same success.

THE COCK AND THE FOX;

OR, THE TALE OF THE NUN'S PRIEST.

There liv'd, as authors tell, in days of yore,
A widow somewhat old, and very poor:
Deep in a cell her cottage lonely stood,
Well thatch'd, and under covert of a wood.
This dowager, on whom my tale I found,
Since last she laid her husband in the ground,
A simple sober life, in patience, led,
And had but just enough to buy her bread:
But huswifing the little Heaven had lent,
She duly paid a groat for quarter rent;
And pinch'd her belly, with her daughters two,
To bring the year about with much ado.
The cattle in her homestead were three sows,
A ewe call'd Mally, and three brinded cows.
Her parlour-window stuck with herbs around,
Of savoury smell; and rushes strew'd the ground.
A maple-dresser in her hall she had,

On which full many a slender meal she made;
For no delicious morsel pass'd her throat;
According to her cloth she cut her coat.
No poignant sauce she knew, nor costly treat,
Her hunger gave a relish to her meat:
A sparing diet did her health assure;
Or sick, a pepper posset was her cure.
Before the day was done, her work she sped,
And never went by candle light to bed:
With exercise she sweat ill humours out,
Her dancing was not hinder'd by the gout.
Her poverty was glad; her heart content,
Nor knew she what the spleen or vapours meant.
Of wine she never tasted through the year,
But white and black was all her homely cheer:
Brown bread, and milk (but first she skimm'd her bowls)
And rashers of sing'd bacon on the coals.
On holy days an egg, or two at most;
But her ambition never reach'd to roast.
A yard she had with pales enclos'd about,
Some high, some low, and a dry ditch without.
Within this homestead liv'd, without a peer,
For crowing loud, the noble Chanticleer;
So hight her cock, whose singing did surpass
The merry notes of organs at the mass.
More certain was the crowing of the cock
To number hours, than is an abbey-clock;
And sooner than the matin-bell was rung,
He clapp'd his wings upon his roost, and sung:
For when degrees fifteen ascended right,

By sure instinct he knew 'twas one at night.
High was his comb, and coral-red withal,
In dents embattell'd like a castle wall;
His bill was raven-black, and shone like jet;
Blue were his legs, and orient were his feet:
White were his nails, like silver to behold,
His body glittering like the burnish'd gold.
This gentle cock, for solace of his life,
Six misses had, besides his lawful wife;
Scandal, that spares no king, though ne'er so good,
Says, they were all of his own flesh and blood,
His sisters both by sire and mother's side;
And sure their likeness show'd them near allied.
But make the worst, the monarch did no more,
Than all the Ptolemys had done before:
When incest is for interest of a nation,
'Tis made no sin by holy dispensation.
Some lines have been maintain'd by this alone,
Which by their common ugliness are known.
  But passing this as from our tale apart,
Dame Partlet was the sovereign of his heart:
Ardent in love, outrageous in his play,
He feather'd her a hundred times a day:
And she, that was not only passing fair,
But was withal discreet, and debonair,
Resolv'd the passive doctrine to fulfill,
Though loth; and let him work his wicked will:
At board and bed was affable and kind,
According as their marriage-vow did bind,
And as the Church's precept had enjoin'd.

E'en since she was a se'nnight old, they say,
Was chaste and humble to her dying day,
Nor chick nor hen was known to disobey.
By this her husband's heart she did obtain;
What cannot beauty, join'd with virtue, gain!
She was his only joy, and he her pride,
She, when he walk'd, went pecking by his side;
If, spurning up the ground, he sprung a corn,
The tribute in his bill to her was borne.
But oh! what joy it was to hear him sing
In summer, when the day began to spring,
Stretching his neck, and warbling in his throat,
Solus cum sola, then was all his note.
For in the days of yore, the birds of parts [arts.
Were bred to speak, and sing, and learn the liberal
It happ'd that, perching on the parlour-beam
Amidst his wives, he had a deadly dream,
Just at the dawn; and sigh'd, and groan'd so fast,
As every breath he drew would be his last.
Dame Partlet, ever nearest to his side,
Heard all his piteous moan, and how he cried
For help from gods and men: and sore aghast
She peck'd and pull'd, and waken'd him at last.
Dear heart, said she, for love of Heaven declare
Your pain, and make me partner of your care.
You groan, Sir, ever since the morning light,
As something had disturb'd your noble spright.
And, Madam, well I might, said Chanticleer,
Never was Shrovetide-cock in such a fear.
E'en still I run all over in a sweat,

My princely senses not recover'd yet.
For such a dream I had of dire portent,
That much I fear my body will be shent:
It bodes I shall have wars and woful strife,
Or in a loathsome dungeon end my life.
Know, dame, I dreamt within my troubled breast,
That in our yard I saw a murderous beast,
That on my body would have made arrest.
With waking eyes I ne'er beheld his fellow;
His colour was betwixt a red and yellow:
Tipp'd was his tail, and both his pricking ears
Were black; and much unlike his other hairs:
The rest, in shape a beagle's whelp throughout,
With broader forehead, and a sharper snout:
Deep in his front were sunk his glowing eyes,
That yet methinks I see him with surprise.
Reach out your hand, I drop with clammy sweat,
And lay it to my heart, and feel it beat.
Now fye for shame, quoth she, by Heaven above,
Thou hast for ever lost thy lady's love;
No woman can endure a recreant knight,
He must be bold by day, and free by night:
Our sex desires a husband or a friend,
Who can our honour and his own defend;
Wise, hardy, secret, liberal of his purse:
A fool is nauseous, but a coward worse:
No bragging coxcomb, yet no baffled knight.
How dar'st thou talk of love, and dar'st not fight?
How dar'st thou tell thy dame thou art afeard?
Hast thou no manly heart, and hast a beard?

If ought from fearful dreams may be divin'd,
They signify a cock of dunghill kind,
All dreams, as in old Galen I have read,
Are from repletion and complexion bred;
From rising fumes of indigested food,
And noxious humours that infect the blood:
And sure, my lord, if I can read aright,
These foolish fancies you have had to-night
Are certain symptoms (in the canting style)
Of boiling choler, and abounding bile;
This yellow gall that in your stomach floats
Engenders all these visionary thoughts.
When choler overflows, then dreams are bred
Of flames, and all the family of red;
Red dragons, and red beasts, in sleep we view,
For humours are distinguish'd by their hue.
From hence we dream of wars and warlike things,
And wasps and hornets with their double wings.
Choler adust congeals our blood with fear,
Then black bulls toss us, and black devils tear.
In sanguine airy dreams aloft we bound,
With rheums oppress'd, we sink in rivers drown'd.
More I could say, but thus conclude my theme,
The dominating humour makes the dream.
Cato was in his time accounted wise,
And he condemns them all for empty lies.
Take my advice, and when we fly to ground,
With laxatives preserve your body sound,
And purge the peccant humours that abound.
I should be loth to lay you on a bier;

And though there lives no 'pothecary near,
I dare for once prescribe for your disease,
And save long bills, and a damn'd doctor's fees.
Two sovereign herbs, which I by practice know,
And both at hand, (for in our yard they grow;)
On peril of my soul shall rid you wholly
Of yellow choler, and of melancholy:
You must both purge and vomit; but obey,
And for the love of heaven make no delay.
Since hot and dry in your complexion join,
Beware the sun when in a vernal sign;
For when he mounts exalted in the Ram,
If then he finds your body in a flame,
Replete with choler, I dare lay a groat,
A tertian ague is at least your lot.
Perhaps a fever (which the gods forefend)
May bring your youth to some untimely end:
And therefore, Sir, as you desire to live,
A day or two before your laxative,
Take just three worms, nor under nor above,
Because the gods unequal numbers love,
These digestives prepare you for your purge;
Of fumetory, centaury, and spurge,
And of ground-ivy add a leaf or two,
All which within our yard or garden grow.
Eat these, and be, my lord, of better cheer.
Your father's son was never born to fear.
Madam, quoth he, gramercy for your care,
But Cato, whom you quoted, you may spare:
'Tis true, a wise and worthy man he seems,

And (as you say) gave no belief to dreams:
But other men of more authority,
And, by the immortal powers, as wise as he,
Maintain with sounder sense, that dreams forebode;
For Homer plainly says they come from God.
Nor Cato said it: but some modern fool
Impos'd in Cato's name on boys at school.
Believe me, Madam, morning dreams foreshow
The events of things, and future weal or woe:
Some truths are not by reason to be tried,
But we have sure experience for our guide.
An ancient author, equal with the best,
Relates this tale of dreams among the rest.
Two friends or brothers, with devout intent,
On some far pilgrimage together went.
It happen'd so that, when the sun was down,
They just arriv'd by twilight at a town:
That day had been the baiting of a bull,
'Twas at a feast, and every inn so full,
That no void room in chamber, or on ground;
And but one sorry bed was to be found:
And that so little it would hold but one,
Though till this hour they never lay alone.
So were they forc'd to part; one staid behind,
His fellow sought what lodging he could find:
At last he found a stall where oxen stood,
And that he rather chose than lie abroad.
'Twas in a farther yard without a door;
But, for his ease, well litter'd was the floor.
His fellow, who the narrow bed had kept,

Was weary, and without a rocker slept:
Supine he snor'd; but, in the dead of night,
He dreamt his friend appear'd before his sight,
Who, with a ghastly look and doleful cry,
Said, Help me, brother, or this night I die:
Arise, and help, before all help be vain,
Or in an ox's stall I shall be slain.
Rous'd from his rest he waken'd in a start,
Shivering with horror, and with aching heart;
At length to cure himself by reason tries;
'Tis but a dream, and what are dreams but lies?
So thinking chang'd his side, and clos'd his eyes.
His dream returns; his friend appears again,
The murderers come, now help, or I am slain:
'Twas but a vision still, and visions are but vain.
He dreamt the third; but now his friend appear'd
Pale, naked, pierc'd with wounds, with blood besmear'd:
Thrice warn'd, awake, said he; relief is late,
The deed is done; but thou revenge my fate:
Tardy of aid, unseal thy heavy eyes,
Awake, and with the dawning day arise:
Take to the western gate thy ready way,
For by that passage they my corpse convey:
My corpse is in a tumbrel laid, among
The filth, and ordure, and inclos'd with dung,
That cart arrest, and raise a common cry;
For sacred hunger of my gold I die:
Then show'd his grisly wounds: and last he drew
A piteous sigh; and took a long adieu.

The frighted friend arose by break of day,
And found the stall where late his fellow lay.
Then of his impious host inquiring more,
Was answer'd that his guest was gone before:
Muttering he went, said he, by morning light,
And much complain'd of his ill rest by night.
This rais'd suspicion in the pilgrim's mind;
Because all hosts are of an evil kind,
And oft to share the spoil with robbers join'd.
His dream confirm'd his thought; with troubled look
Straight to the western gate his way he took;
There, as his dream foretold, a cart he found,
That carried compost forth to dung the ground.
This when the pilgrim saw, he stretch'd his throat,
And cried out murder with a yelling note.
My murder'd fellow in this cart lies dead,
Vengeance and justice on the villain's head.
You, magistrates, who sacred laws dispense,
On you I call to punish this offence.
The word thus given, within a little space,
The mob came roaring out, and throng'd the place.
All in a trice they cast the cart to ground,
And in the dung the murder'd body found;
Though breathless, warm, and reeking from the wound.
Good Heaven, whose darling attribute we find
Is boundless grace, and mercy to mankind,
Abhors the cruel; and the deeds of night
By wondrous ways reveals in open light:

Murder may pass unpunish'd for a time,
But tardy justice will o'ertake the crime.
And oft a speedier pain the guilty feels, [heels,
The hue and cry of Heaven pursues him at the
Fresh from the fact; as in the present case,
The criminals are seiz'd upon the place:
Carter and host confronted face to face.
Stiff in denial, as the law appoints,
On engines they distend their tortur'd joints:
So was confession forc'd, the offence was known,
And public justice on the offenders done.

Here may you see that visions are to dread;
And in the page that follows this, I read
Of two young merchants, whom the hope of gain
Induc'd in partnership to cross the main:
Waiting till willing winds their sails supplied,
Within a trading-town they long abide,
Full fairly situate on a haven's side.

One evening it befell, that, looking out,
The wind they long had wish'd was come about:
Well pleas'd they went to rest; and if the gale
Till morn continu'd, both resolv'd to sail.
But as together in a bed they lay,
The younger had a dream at break of day.
A man he thought stood frowning at his side:
Who warn'd him for his safety to provide,
Nor put to sea, but safe on shore abide.
I come, thy genius, to command thy stay;
Trust not the winds, for fatal is the day,
And death unhop'd attends the watery way.

The vision said: and vanish'd from his sight:
The dreamer waken'd in a mortal fright:
Then pull'd his drowsy neighbour, and declar'd
What in his slumber he had seen and heard.
His friend smil'd scornful, and with proud contempt
Rejects as idle what his fellow dreamt.
Stay, who will stay: for me no fears restrain,
Who follow Mercury the god of gain;
Let each man do as to his fancy seems,
I wait, not I, till you have better dreams.
Dreams are but interludes which fancy makes,
When monarch reason sleeps, this mimic wakes;
Compounds a medley of disjointed things,
A mob of cobblers, and a court of kings:
Light fumes are merry, grosser fumes are sad:
Both are the reasonable soul run mad:
And many monstrous forms in sleep we see,
That neither were, nor are, nor e'er can be.
Sometimes forgotten things long cast behind
Rush forward in the brain, and come to mind.
The nurse's legends are for truths receiv'd,
And the man dreams but what the boy believ'd.
Sometimes we but rehearse a former play,
The night restores our actions done by day;
As hounds in sleep will open for their prey.
In short the farce of dreams is of a piece,
Chimeras all; and more absurd, or less:
You, who believe in tales, abide alone;
Whate'er I get this voyage is my own.
Thus while he spoke, he heard the shouting crew

That call'd aboard, and took his last adieu.
The vessel went before a merry gale,
And for quick passage put on every sail:
But when least fear'd, and e'en in open day,
The mischief overtook her in the way:
Whether she sprung a leak, I cannot find,
Or whether she was overset with wind,
Or that some rock below her bottom rent;
But down at once with all her crew she went:
Her fellow-ships from far her loss descried;
But only she was sunk, and all were safe beside.
By this example you are taught again,
That dreams and visions are not always vain:
But if, dear Partlet, you are still in doubt,
Another tale shall make the former out.
Kenelm, the son of Kenulph, Mercia's king,
Whose holy life the legends loudly sing,
Warn'd in a dream, his murder did foretell
From point to point as after it befell:
All circumstances to his nurse he told,
(A wonder from a child of seven years old:)
The dream with horror heard, the good old wife
From treason counsell'd him to guard his life;
But close to keep the secret in his mind,
For a boy's vision small belief would find.
The pious child, by promise bound, obey'd,
Nor was the fatal murder long delay'd:
By Quenda slain, he fell before his time,
Made a young martyr by his sister's crime.
The tale is told by venerable Bede,

Which, at your better leisure, you may read.
  Macrobius too relates the vision sent
To the great Scipio, with the fam'd event:
Objections makes, but after makes replies,
And adds, that dreams are often prophecies.
  Of Daniel you may read in holy writ,
Who, when the king his vision did forget,
Could word for word the wondrous dream repeat.
Nor less of patriarch Joseph understand,
Who by a dream enslav'd the Egyptian land,
The years of plenty and of dearth foretold,
When, for their bread, their liberty they sold.
Nor must the exalted butler be forgot,
Nor he whose dream presag'd his hanging lot.
  And did not Crœsus the same death foresee,
Rais'd in his vision on a lofty tree?
The wife of Hector, in his utmost pride,
Dreamt of his death the night before he died;
Well was he warn'd from battle to refrain,
But men to death decreed are warn'd in vain:
He dar'd the dream, and by his fatal foe was slain.
  Much more I know, which I forbear to speak,
For see the ruddy day begins to break;
Let this suffice, that plainly I foresee
My dream was bad, and bodes adversity:
But neither pills nor laxatives I like,
They only serve to make the well man sick:
Of these his gain the sharp physician makes,
And often gives a purge, but seldom takes:
They not correct, but poison all the blood,

And ne'er did any but the doctors good.
Their tribe, trade, trinkets, I defy them all;
With every work of 'pothecary's hall.
These melancholy matters I forbear:
But let me tell thee, Partlet mine, and swear,
That when I view the beauties of thy face,
I fear not death, nor dangers, nor disgrace:
So may my soul have bliss, as when I spy
The scarlet red about thy partridge eye,
While thou art constant to thy own true knight,
While thou art mine, and I am thy delight,
All sorrows at thy presence take their flight.
For true it is, as in principio,
Mulier est hominis confusio.
Madam, the meaning of this Latin is,
That woman is to man his sovereign bliss.
For when by night I feel your tender side,
Though for the narrow perch I cannot ride,
Yet I have such a solace in my mind,
That all my boding cares are cast behind;
And e'en already I forget my dream:
He said, and downward flew from off the beam.
For daylight now began apace to spring,
The thrush to whistle, and the lark to sing.
Then crowing clapp'd his wings, the appointed call,
To chuck his wives together in the hall.

By this the widow had unbarr'd the door,
And Chanticleer went strutting out before,
With royal courage, and with heart so light,
As show'd he scorn'd the visions of the night.

Now roaming in the yard, he spurn'd the ground.
And gave to Partlet the first grain he found.
Then often feather'd her with wanton play,
And trod her twenty times ere prime of day:
And took by turns and gave so much delight,
Her sisters pin'd with envy at the sight.
He chuck'd again, when other corns he found,
And scarcely deign'd to set a foot to ground.
But swagger'd like a lord about his hall,
And his seven wives came running at his call.
'Twas now the month in which the world began,
(If March beheld the first created man:)
And since the vernal equinox, the sun,
In Aries twelve degrees, or more, had run;
When casting up his eyes against the light,
Both month, and day, and hour he measur'd right;
And told more truly than the Ephemeris:
For art may err, but nature cannot miss.
Thus numbering times and seasons in his breast,
His second crowing the third hour confess'd.
Then turning, said to Partlet, See, my dear,
How lavish nature has adorn'd the year;
How the pale primrose and blue violet spring,
And birds essay their throats disus'd to sing:
All these are ours; and I with pleasure see
Man strutting on two legs, and aping me:
An unfledg'd creature, of a lumpish frame,
Endued with fewer particles of flame;
Our dame sits couring o'er a kitchen fire,
I draw fresh air, and nature's works admire:

And e'en this day in more delight abound,
Than, since I was an egg, I ever found.
The time shall come when Chanticleer shall wish
His words unsaid, and hate his boasted bliss
The crested bird shall by experience know,
Jove made not him his masterpiece below ;
And learn the latter end of joy is woe.
The vessel of his bliss to dregs is run,
And Heaven will have him taste his other tun.
Ye wise, draw near, and hearken to my tale,
Which proves that oft the proud by flattery fall :
The legend is as true I undertake
As Tristran is, and Launcelot of the lake :
Which all our ladies in such reverence hold,
As if in Book of Martyrs it were told.
A fox full-fraught with seeming sanctity,
That fear'd an oath, but, like the devil, would lie ;
Who look'd like Lent, and had the holy leer,
And durst not sin before he said his prayer ;
This pious cheat, that never suck'd the blood,
Nor chew'd the flesh of lambs, but when he could ;
Had pass'd three summers in the neighbouring wood :
And musing long, whom next to circumvent,
On Chanticleer his wicked fancy bent :
And in his high imagination cast,

473 *And Heaven will have him taste his other tun*] An allusion to Homer's allegory of the two urns. Δοιοὶ γὰρ τε Πίθοι, Iliad 24. l. 527. used by Achilles in consolation to the afflicted Priam. *J. W.*

By stratagem to gratify his taste.
The plot contriv'd, before the break of day
Saint Reynard through the hedge had made his way;
The pale was next, but proudly with a bound
He leapt the fence of the forbidden ground:
Yet fearing to be seen, within a bed
Of coleworts he conceal'd his wily head;
Then skulk'd till afternoon, and watch'd his time,
(As murderers use) to perpetrate his crime.
O hypocrite, ingenious to destroy,
O traitor, worse than Sinon was to Troy!
O vile subverter of the Gallic reign,
More false than Gano was to Charlemaign!
O Chanticleer, in an unhappy hour
Didst thou forsake the safety of thy bower:
Better for thee thou hadst believed thy dream,
And not that day descended from the beam!
But here the doctors eagerly dispute:
Some hold predestination absolute:
Some clerks maintain, that Heaven at first foresees,
And in the virtue of foresight decrees.
If this be so, then prescience binds the will,
And mortals are not free to good or ill;
For what he first foresaw, he must ordain,
Or its eternal prescience may be vain:
As bad for us as prescience had not been:
For first, or last, he's author of the sin.
And who says that, let the blaspheming man
Say worse e'en of the devil, if he can.

For how can that eternal power be just
To punish man, who sins because he must?
Or how can he reward a virtuous deed,
Which is not done by us; but first decreed?
I cannot bolt this matter to the bran,
As Bradwardin and holy Austin can;
If prescience can determine actions so
That we must do, because he did foreknow,
Or that foreknowing, yet our choice is free
Not forc'd to sin by strict necessity;
This strict necessity they simple call,
Another sort there is conditional.
The first so binds the will, that things foreknown
By spontaneity, not choice, are done.
Thus galley-slaves tug willing at their oar,
Content to work, in prospect of the shore;
But would not work at all if not constrain'd before.
That other does not liberty constrain,
But man may either act or may refrain.
Heaven made us agents free to good or ill,
And forc'd it not, though he foresaw the will.
Freedom was first bestow'd on human race,
And prescience only held the second place.
If he could make such agents wholly free,
I not dispute, the point's too high for me;
For Heaven's unfathom'd power what man can sound,
Or put to his omnipotence a bound?
He made us to his image, all agree;
That image is the soul, and that must be,
Or not the Maker's image, or be free.

But whether it were better man had been
By nature bound to good, not free to sin,
I wave, for fear of splitting on a rock,
The tale I tell is only of a cock;
Who had not run the hazard of his life,
Had he believ'd his dream, and not his wife:
For women, with a mischief to their kind,
Pervert, with bad advice, our better mind.
A woman's counsel brought us first to woe,
And made her man his paradise forego,
Where at heart's ease he liv'd; and might have been
As free from sorrow as he was from sin.
For what the devil had their sex to do,
That, born to folly, they presum'd to know,
And could not see the serpent in the grass?
But I myself presume, and let it pass.
Silence in times of suffering is the best,
'Tis dangerous to disturb a hornet's nest.
In other authors you may find enough,
But all they say of dames is idle stuff.
Legends of lying wits together bound,
The wife of Bath would throw 'em to the ground;
These are the words of Chanticleer, not mine,
I honour dames, and think their sex divine.
Now to continue what my tale begun;
Lay madam Partlet basking in the sun,
Breast-high in sand: her sisters, in a row,
Enjoy'd the beams above, the warmth below.
The cock, that of his flesh was ever free,
Sung merrier than the mermaid in the sea:

And so befell, that as he cast his eye
Among the coleworts on a butterfly,
He saw false Reynard where he lay full low:
I need not swear he had no list to crow:
But cried, cock, cock, and gave a sudden start,
As sore dismay'd and frighted at his heart.
For birds and beasts, inform'd by nature, know
Kinds opposite to theirs, and fly their foe.
So Chanticleer, who never saw a fox,
Yet shunn'd him as a sailor shuns the rocks.
But the false loon, who could not work his will
By open force, employ'd his flattering skill;
I hope, my lord, said he, I not offend;
Are you afraid of me, that am your friend?
I were a beast indeed to do you wrong,
I, who have lov'd and honour'd you so long:
Stay, gentle Sir, nor take a false alarm,
For on my soul I never meant to harm.
I come no spy, nor as a traitor press,
To learn the secrets of your soft recess:
Far be from Reynard so profane a thought,
But by the sweetness of your voice was brought:
For, as I bid my beads, by chance I heard
The song as of an angel in the yard;
A song that would have charm'd the infernal gods,
And banish'd horror from the dark abodes:
Had Orpheus sung it in the nether sphere,
So much the hymn had pleas'd the tyrant's ear,
The wife had been detain'd, to keep the husband
My lord, your sire familiarly I knew, [there.

A peer deserving such a son as you:
He, with your lady-mother, (whom Heaven rest)
Has often grac'd my house, and been my guest:
To view his living features does me good,
For I am your poor neighbour in the wood;
And in my cottage should be proud to see
The worthy heir of my friend's family.

But since I speak of singing, let me say,
As with an upright heart I safely may,
That, save yourself, there breathes not on the ground
One like your father for a silver sound.
So sweetly would he wake the winter-day,
That matrons to the church mistook their way,
And thought they heard the merry organ play.
And he to raise his voice with artful care,
(What will not beaux attempt to please the fair?)
On tiptoe stood to sing with greater strength,
And stretch'd his comely neck at all the length:
And while he strain'd his voice to pierce the skies,
As saints in raptures use, would shut his eyes,
That the sound striving through the narrow throat,
His winking might avail to mend the note.
By this, in song, he never had his peer,
From sweet Cecilia down to Chanticleer;
Not Maro's muse, who sung the mighty man,
Nor Pindar's heavenly lyre, nor Horace when a swan.
Your ancestors proceed from race divine:
From Brennus and Belinus is your line;
Who gave to sovereign Rome such loud alarms,
That e'en the priests were not excus'd from arms.

Besides, a famous monk of modern times
Has left of cocks recorded in his rhymes,
That of a parish priest the son and heir,
(When sons of priests were from the proverb clear)
Affronted once a cock of noble kind,
And either lam'd his legs, or struck him blind;
For which the clerk his father was disgrac'd,
And in his benefice another plac'd.
Now sing, my lord, if not for love of me,
Yet for the sake of sweet Saint Charity;
Make hills, and dales, and earth, and heaven re-
And emulate your father's angel-voice. [joice,

The cock was pleas'd to hear him speak so fair,
And proud beside, as solar people are;
Nor could the treason from the truth descry,
So was he ravish'd with this flattery:
So much the more, as from a little elf,
He had a high opinion of himself;
Though sickly, slender, and not large of limb,
Concluding all the world was made for him.

Ye princes, rais'd by poets to the gods,
And Alexander'd up in lying odes,
Believe not every flattering knave's report,
There's many a Reynard lurking in the court;
And he shall be receiv'd with more regard,
And listen'd to, than modest truth is heard.

This Chanticleer, of whom the story sings,
Stood high upon his toes, and clapp'd his wings;
Then stretch'd his neck, and wink'd with both his
Ambitious as he sought the Olympic prize. [eyes,

But while he pain'd himself to raise his note,
False Reynard rush'd, and caught him by the [throat.
Then on his back he laid the precious load,
And sought his wonted shelter of the wood;
Swiftly he made his way, the mischief done,
Of all unheeded, and pursu'd by none.
Alas, what stay is there in human state,
Or who can shun inevitable fate?
The doom was written, the decree was past,
Ere the foundations of the world were cast!
In Aries though the sun exalted stood,
His patron-planet to procure his good;
Yet Saturn was his mortal foe, and he,
In Libra rais'd, oppos'd the same degree:
The rays both good and bad, of equal power,
Each thwarting other, made a mingled hour.
On Friday morn he dreamt this direful dream,
Cross to the worthy native, in his scheme!
Ah blissful Venus, goddess of delight,
How couldst thou suffer thy devoted knight,
On thy own day to fall by foe oppress'd,
The wight of all the world who serv'd thee best?
Who true to love, was all for recreation,
And minded not the work of propagation.
Gaufride, who couldst so well in rhyme complain
The death of Richard with an arrow slain,
Why had not I thy muse, or thou my heart,
To sing this heavy dirge with equal art!
That I like thee on Friday might complain;
For on that day was Cœur de Lion slain.

Not louder cries, when Ilium was in flames,
Were sent to heaven by woful Trojan dames,
When Pyrrhus toss'd on high his burnish'd blade,
And offer'd Priam to his father's shade,
Than for the cock the widow'd poultry made.
Fair Partlet first, when he was borne from sight,
With sovereign shrieks bewail'd her captive knight:
Far louder than the Carthaginian wife,
When Asdrubal her husband lost his life,
When she beheld the smould'ring flames ascend,
And all the Punic glories at an end:
Willing into the fires she plung'd her head,
With greater ease than others seek their bed.
Not more aghast the matrons of renown,
When tyrant Nero burn'd the imperial town,
Shriek'd for the downfall in a doleful cry,
For which their guiltless lords were doom'd to die.

Now to my story I return again:
The trembling widow, and her daughters twain,
This woful cackling cry with horror heard,
Of those distracted damsels in the yard:
And starting up, beheld the heavy sight,
How Reynard to the forest took his flight,
And cross his back, as in triumphant scorn,
The hope and pillar of the house was borne.

The fox, the wicked fox, was all the cry;
Out from his house ran every neighbour nigh:
The vicar first, and after him the crew,
With forks and staves the felon to pursue.
Ran Coll our dog, and Talbot with the band,

And Malkin, with her distaff in her hand:
Ran cow and calf, and family of hogs,
In panic horror of pursuing dogs;
With many a deadly grunt and doleful squeak,
Poor swine, as if their pretty hearts would break.
The shouts of men, the women in dismay,
With shrieks augment the terror of the day.
The ducks, that heard the proclamation cried,
And fear'd a persecution might betide,
Full twenty mile from town their voyage take,
Obscure in rushes of the liquid lake.
The geese fly o'er the barn; the bees in arms
Drive headlong from their waxen cells in swarms.
Jack Straw at London stone, with all his rout,
Struck not the city with so loud a shout;
Not when with English hate they did pursue
A Frenchman, or an unbelieving Jew:
Not when the welkin rung with 'one and all;'
And echoes bounded back from Fox's hall:
Earth seem'd to sink beneath, and heaven above
to fall. [fox,
With might and main they chas'd the murderous
With brazen trumpets, and inflated box,
To kindle Mars with military sounds,
Nor wanted horns to inspire sagacious hounds.
But see how Fortune can confound the wise,
And when they least expect it, turn the dice.
The captive-cock, who scarce could draw his breath,
And lay within the very jaws of death;
Yet in this agony his fancy wrought,

And fear supplied him with this happy thought;
Yours is the prize, victorious prince, said he,
The vicar my defeat, and all the village see.
Enjoy your friendly fortune while you may,
And bid the churls that envy you the prey
Call back their mongrel curs, and cease their cry,
See, fools, the shelter of the wood is nigh,
And Chanticleer in your despite shall die,
He shall be pluck'd and eaten to the bone.
'Tis well advis'd, in faith it shall be done;
This Reynard said; but as the word he spoke,
The prisoner with a spring from prison broke:
Then stretch'd his feather'd fans with all his might,
And to the neighbouring maple wing'd his flight.
Whom when the traitor safe on tree beheld,
He curs'd the gods, with shame and sorrow fill'd;
Shame for his folly, sorrow out of time,
For plotting an unprofitable crime;
Yet mastering both, the artificer of lies
Renews the assault, and his last battery tries.
Though I, said he, did ne'er in thought offend,
How justly may my lord suspect his friend?
The appearance is against me, I confess,
Who seemingly have put you in distress:
You, if your goodness does not plead my cause,
May think I broke all hospitable laws,
To bear you from your palace-yard by might,
And put your noble person in a fright:
This, since you take it ill, I must repent,
Though Heaven can witness, with no bad intent

I practis'd it, to make you taste your cheer
With double pleasure, first prepar'd by fear.
So loyal subjects often seize their prince,
Forc'd (for his good) to seeming violence,
Yet mean his sacred person not the least offence.
Descend; so help me Jove, as you shall find
That Reynard comes of no dissembling kind.
Nay, quoth the cock; but I beshrew us both,
If I believe a saint upon his oath:
An honest man may take a knave's advice,
But idiots only will be cozen'd twice:
Once warn'd is well bewar'd; no flattering lies
Shall sooth me more to sing with winking eyes,
And open mouth, for fear of catching flies.
Who blindfold walks upon a river's brim,
When he should see, has he deserv'd to swim?
Better, sir cock, let all contention cease,
Come down, said Reynard, let us treat of peace.
A peace with all my soul, said Chanticleer;
But, with your favour, I will treat it here:
And lest the truce with treason should be mix'd,
'Tis my concern to have the tree betwixt.

THE MORAL.

In this plain fable you the effect may see
Of negligence and fond credulity:
And learn besides of flatterers to beware,
Then most pernicious when they speak too fair.

The cock and fox the fool and knave imply;
The truth is moral, though the tale a lie.
Who spoke in parables, I dare not say;
But sure he knew it was a pleasing way,
Sound sense, by plain example, to convey.
And in a heathen author we may find,
That pleasure with instruction should be join'd;
So take the corn, and leave the chaff behind.

END OF VOL. III.

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